THE

ROSE GARDEN OF PERSIA.


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BY

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گفتم مگر نسیم صبا ز چمن رسید
یا کاروان مشک ز راه ختن رسید

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INTRODUCTION

The softest and the richest language in the world is the Persian: it is so peculiarly adapted to the purposes of poetry, that it is acknowledged there have been more poets produced in Persia than in all the other nations of Europe

together: yet, except Sadi and Hafiz, and, it may be, Ferdusi, there are few whose names even are known to the general English reader; and the too common impression is, that there exists a great monotony in their verse, both as to sound and sense.

This is so far from being the case, that there is, perhaps, in no poetry so much variety, both in style and subject, as in the musical and expressive Persian. Sir William Jones, that great authority and competent judge not only in Oriental beauties of language but in all matters of taste, has justly pronounced, that the verse of the East is—"rich in forcible expressions, in bold metaphors, in sentiments full of fire, and in descriptions animated with the most lively colouring."

This secret treasure has, however, seldom been sought, except by the learned; and the idea that it belonged exclusively to that class has deterred many from endeavouring to understand it, and from availing themselves of the labours of those English, French, and German scholars, who have devoted their powerful energies to render the charming, but neglected, study known. Still it must be confessed, that it would require some perseverance, and considerable fatigue, to the admirer of Eastern literature, to seek amongst the authors in each of these languages for the precious poetical gems, which are so scattered, and so hard to find. As these difficulties did not deter me, I have been enabled to bring together a collection of all that pleased me most; and am in hopes that the English reader will be gratified to meet at once, without

trouble, with many of the treasures he has so long slighted.

Sir William Jones remarks, in his "Preface" to a few translations:—"If the novelty of the following poems should recommend them to the favour of the reader, it may, probably, be agreeable to him to know that there are many others of equal or superior merit which have never appeared in any language of Europe; and I am persuaded that a writer acquainted with the originals might imitate them very happily in his native tongue, and that the public would not be displeased to see the genuine compositions of Arabia and Persia in an English dress."

Since the period when the accomplished Orientalist wrote this, many translations in French, German, and English have appeared, but most frequently in prose; so that the ground may be considered untroddeu by all but learned feet, and still as mysterious as the fabled gardens of Irem to the general reader. The beautiful specimens given to the world, from time to time, by Mr. Forbes Falconer, in "The Asiatic Journal," are almost alone, and appear but too rarely.

The late lamented Sir Gore Ouseley, at the time of his death, was preparing a work for the press on Persian literature, which the Asiatic Society is now printing; I have been allowed, by the courtesy of that society, to whom I am deeply indebted, to see the MS., and had I done so previously to this work being ready for publication, I should have felt my own attempt unnecessary: the

accomplished author has not, however, given lyrical specimens of the poets in English.

"The mine of Persian literature," observes an elegant writer, "contains every substance, from the dazzling diamond to the useful granite, and its materials may be employed with equal success to build castles in the air or upon earth."

Poetry has ever been, and is still, held in the greatest veneration in the East, and its admirers include almost the whole population; respect and esteem attend on the aspirant for poetic fame, and even the smallest spark of genius is hailed with delight. The power and effect of the art are so much appreciated by the Arabs, that they have given it the name of "legitimate magic;" and "to string pearls," expresses, in their figurative language, to compose verses.

Many Eastern anecdotes are related of the early dawn of poetry in the youthful mind, and the admiration its appearance excited; amongst others, the following is characteristic:—The celebrated Abderrahmân, son of Hissân, having, when a child, been stung by a wasp, the insect being one he did not recognize, he ran to his father, crying out—"That he had been wounded by a creature spotted with yellow and white, like the border of his vest." On hearing these words uttered in a measure of Arabian verse, as elegant as natural, Hissân became aware of his son's genius for poetry.

The first rhythmical composition in the Persian language is recorded to have been the production of Bihrâm Goar, a prince who lived in the fifth

century, A.D. The occasion of his becoming a poet was this:—He was tenderly attached to a female slave, named Dilârâm, who generally attended him in all his parties of pleasure. One day the prince encountered a lion when in the company of his favourite, seized him, after a struggle, *by the ears*, and, holding him captive in this manner for some time, in spite of the animal's efforts to free himself, exultingly exclaimed, in sounding verse,—"I am as the raging elephant, I am as an active and mighty lion!" Dilârâm, being accustomed to reply to whatever the king said in the same strain as her royal lover, addressed him *extempore* with a fine compliment, in which, punning on his name and that of his father, she compared him to a "lofty mountain."

Bihrâm, being struck with the cadence and jingle of these accidental verses, pointed out their beauties to the learned men of his court, and desired them to produce something in imitation. This they accordingly attempted, but without ever exceeding a single distich in any of their compositions.

Several other origins are given by the Persians to their earliest poetry, but, except occasional lines more beautiful to the ear than the mind, there is little known before the tenth century of the Christian era.

The first poem, expressing sentiment, to be met with in Persian records, is the following:—

> "Why should the antelope, as once of yore,
> Bound o'er the plain, as swiftly as before?

Alas! why should his boasted speed be tried,
To quit the spot where those he loves abide?"

Bigotry and ignorance combined to prevent the growth of poetry in Persia, as well as in most other countries. It is related of one of their princes that on a manuscript being shown him, containing a poetical history of the loves of Wâmik and Asrah, he exclaimed, that the koran was the only book he desired his subjects to read, and commanded it to be burnt, together with any others found in his dominions. Arabic continued long to be the court language, used in all transactions of state, the native Persian being thought barbarous and impolite, in the same manner as in early times the French superseded the native English in our own country. Ferdusi was the Chaucer of Persia, but there were a few others, as with us, who had already struggled to break the way for the great poet.

In poetical composition there is much art used by Eastern writers, and the arrangement of their language is a work of great care: numerous are the rules by which they must guide themselves in their verses; as, for instance, the *art*, which in Arabic signifies *setting jewels*, by which words are selected which bear a similarity in sound: of this custom, varied in a number of ways, and all considered to possess great merit in a skilful hand, we have, in the poetry of the troubadours and early French and English writers, many examples: in translation this would appear little better than a string of puns.

One favourite measure is called Sujá, literally *the cooing of doves*, and it frequently ends a poem: the *letters* must be equal or the same, and the rhyme agreeing: the same *word* must sometimes appear in different parts of the distich;[a] sometimes an anagram must be made; sometimes the sentence must be capable of being read backwards and forwards.[b] To attempt examples of these punning conceits would be useless and little desirable; of course, in the original language alone could they be understood. The following is one of the easiest:—

"They call me *madman*—if 'tis so,
Bind with thy locks that softly flow
The *madman*, that at least he be
Held in thy chains and slave to thee."

The poetical compositions of the Persians are of several kinds. The Gazel, or Ode, literally signifies taking delight in the society of the fair sex, and is used technically for several couplets composed in one measure. As a general rule, the Gazel should not contain more than twelve distichs, though some poets have greatly exceeded this length. The usual subjects of the Gazels are beauty, love, or friendship; but frequently they are employed to set forth the praises of wine, and many treat of the mysteries of the Sufis. The poet generally introduces his name in the last couplet.

The Kassideh, or Idyl, resembles the Gazel, except that it has more distichs. It may consist of

either praise or satire, morality or other subjects. The Persians do not extend the length beyond one hundred and twenty distichs; but the Arabians sometimes make it exceed five hundred.

The Tushbib signifies a representation of the season of youth and beauty, descriptions of love, praise, or a relation of circumstances.

The Mesnavi is called *wedded*, its rhymes and measure being even, and each distich having distinct endings.

The other measures are less common, or, at least, their explanation is less required, as their peculiarities could scarcely be made sensible to the reader of an English translation.

"When Niebuhr and his scientific companions," remarks a writer on eastern literature, "set out on their travels to the east, they were instructed by their patron, the King of Denmark, to have *nothing to do with poetry:* but he might as well have shut the book of knowledge from them at once; for the fact is, that in the Arabic, as well as Persian language, not only books of polite literature, but histories without number, and all manner of treatises on science, are recorded in verse."

Physics, mathematics, and ethics; medicine, natural history, astronomy, and grammar, and even *cookery*, all lend themselves to verse in the east.

Amongst the most famous works of this kind, is the Kitáb Alágháni, or Book of Songs, by Abu'l-faraj Ali Ben Hassayn Ben Mahomed Korashi Isfahani, who was born in the year of the Hegira 284. He was brought up at Bagdad, was deeply

learned in the history of the Arabs, and in all other knowledge, and took his place with the most distinguished men of his time. He devoted fifty years to the composition of this, his celebrated work, and died in 356, having lost his reason some time previous to his death.

The Kitáh Alágháni is an important biographical work, notwithstanding its title, treating of grammar, history, and science, as well as poetry.

The work was unknown in France till it was discovered in the expedition to Egypt, and brought home by M. Raige. The manuscript he procured is now in the Royal Library: it consists of four folio volumes. M. Von Hammer is in possession of a copy. The basis is a collection of one hundred songs made for the Caliph Raschid: the airs are given, with commentaries and parallels. It may answer, in some respects, to our 'Percy's Relics.'

But it is with subjects purely poetical and imaginative that the present work has to do.

Who is there that is not familiar with those beautiful verses of Sir William Jones, translated from Hafiz?

"Sweet maid, if thou wouldst charm my sight," &c.

This learned man and elegant and accomplished poet once, as he informs us, proposed making a collection of Persian poetry, and giving it an English dress; if he had fortunately done so and rendered the ideas as finely as he has done in the above poem, he would have made a valuable present to his country, for none could have executed

the task so well; but his labours and avocations were too many and too various to admit of his performing the task he desired. No one, since his time, has attempted it, although numerous poems have been, from time to time, presented to the English reader; and Ferdusi and Sadi, in particular, have found their translators in learned and industrious scholars.

Atkinson, Chézé, and Von Hammer have in England, France, and Germany done much towards rendering the greatest Persian poets known; but a less learned hand may perhaps succeed in making them more familiar, and, by collecting a great number of poets together, enable the reader to judge and compare at his leisure, not that it would be possible to offer specimens of one quarter of the myriad poets of Persia!

So great has been my own delight and enthusiasm on the subject for many years, that I cannot help hoping that others may feel equally interested with myself, and happy to have found a new source of admiration of the graceful and beautiful.

I scarcely dare address a word to the oriental scholar in extenuation of my attempt to render his darling poets into my northern tongue: I only trust he will forgive the boldness for the sake of the devotion, and, instead of being severe, will at once excuse the execution; considering only the motive, which is to make "familiar in the mouth as household words" those unknown and unsought treasures, which he alone is capable of prizing to their full value.

To the Orientalist is known the extreme difficulty of conveying in any European tongue the exact meaning of the poet: the Germans have perhaps succeeded best in consequence of the construction of their language; but mere *words* alone in Persian sometimes express so much that the translator finds all his efforts unavailing to render them of the same force. For instance, the Persians have words and names which at one view exhibit many qualities without more explanation, and which throw a charm over their songs, impossible to reach.

Such words as express *strewing-roses*, *emerald-hue*, *rose-cheeked*, *rose-lipped*, *jasmine-scented*, *&c.*, save the poet infinite trouble, but are a great obstacle to the translator. Perhaps it is the very circumstance of endeavouring to render these ideas correctly which has cramped all who have tried to give versions of the Persian poets, so that almost the sole exceptions are the few poems given by Sir William Jones, in a manner unrivalled both for truth and sweetness.

Ferdusi's "Shah-Namah," the great Epic, in an English garb, inspires as little admiration, as a whole, as any of the translators of the Lusiad do to an English reader: Professor Chézé's "Mejnûn and Leila," elegant and interesting as the translation is, is yet somewhat tedious from its very correctness, and Sadi's fine poems, the "Bostân" and the "Gulistân," though they have been well rendered in English prose, are somewhat ineffective, and it requires the genius of Moore

himself to translate adequately his brother minstrel, Hafiz. A few extracts only of these long poems are all I offer.

As I know little of the Persian poets in the original, and am generally indebted to the above, and other learned authors, who have furnished accurate translations, I am the more fearful of the success of my endeavour to make them popular, in spite of the *bonne volonté* I may bring to the task; but, I repeat, it has been one so very pleasing to me, that I cannot abandon the hope that the "ROSE GARDEN OF PERSIA," even in my hands, may not be considered without perfume.

ON ORNAMENT

The Orientals appear to agree in opinion with the Italians, that "molto cresce una beltà, uno bel manto;" for they have at all times taken great delight in adorning their manuscripts, considering that they thus do honour to the subject. Rousseau's feeling of paying proper homage to his

manuscript Héloise would be thoroughly understood in the East.

The works of favourite poets are generally written on fine silky paper, the ground of which is often powdered with gold or silver dust; the margins are illuminated, and the whole perfumed with some costly essence. Amongst others, that magnificent volume containing the poem of Yussuf and Zuleika,(c) preserved in the public library at Oxford, affords a proof of the honours accorded to poetical compositions: the British Museum is also rich in equally beautiful manuscripts.

One of the finest specimens of calligraphy and illumination is the exordium to the "Life of Shah Jehan," for which the writer, besides the stipulated remuneration, had *his mouth stuffed* with the most precious pearls.

A finely ornamented book is considered an excitement to youth to study: in the preface to a work called "The Dispelling of Darkness," is this passage—"This work, accurately written for its calligraphy, must be a comfort and excitement to the young."

Calligraphy is called in the East "a golden profession." Of all books copied with peculiar care and taste, the Koran has employed the greatest number of writers, who vie with each other in their extraordinary performances in this style; this caused the poet Sadi to say, that "the Koran was sent to reform the conduct of men, but men thought only of embellishing its leaves."

A maxim of the Caliph Ali was—"Learn to

write well; fine writing is one of the keys of riches."

The Persian commentator on "Arabic Aphorisms" (edited by Weston), says:—"Words set to music have a wondrous power when aided by inspiration and the *magic of fine writing.*" Again— "A poem is a sweet-scented flower, spotted like a leopard, polished with much rubbing, and *written with the ink of two centuries.*" "An impostor rivets his triumph by *writing carelessly*, and making it difficult to decipher, so that no extracts can be made that will repay the loss of time in reading it."

Fakr-eddin Rasi, when speaking of the merits of the Caliph Mostasem-billah, says:—"He knew the Koran by heart, and his hand-writing was very beautiful."

A manuscript of the "Divan" of the poet Kemal, which had been the property of a sultan, is possessed by the Imperial Library at Vienna, and is a great treasure as a splendid specimen of fine writing, and also for the superbly executed miniatures which adorn it, illustrating the poems. These pictures are not more than a square inch in size; there are two on each side of the concluding verse, and, though so small, represent with the greatest correctness, either allegorically or simply, the meaning of the poet.

Mr. Edward More, author of the "Hindoo Pantheon," mentions some very exquisite manuscripts in his possession: one, of fourteen and a half feet long, can be rolled up to the size of a man's thumb. The library of the India House, and that of the

Asiatic Society in London, from the latter of which I have been allowed to take patterns for this work, are rich in very beautiful specimens of Oriental minuteness: amongst them are copies of the koran on delicate strips exquisitely illuminated, so small as to require a strong glass to decipher the character. Some of these can be rolled up into an almost incredibly small space, and carried in the pocket. Nothing but the fairy's gift of tapestry, which could be enclosed in a walnut shell, can be compared to these wonders. A copy of the "Mahabarata" was lately in London, which is said to exceed all that could be imagined of human patience in the minute beauty of its execution.

The ink used in the East is extremely black, and never loses its colour. Egyptian reeds, with which the scribes write, are formed to make the finest strokes and flourishes, and their letters run so easily into one another that they can write faster than any other nation.

There is a beautiful manuscript of Dowlat Shah of Samarkand's valuable "Lives of the Persian Poets," in the Royal Library at Paris.

THE SUFIS.

Most of the Asiatic poets are *Sufis*,(1) a profession of religion so mystical, that it is difficult to explain in a few words.

They prefer, or profess to prefer, the meditations and ecstasies of mysticism to the pleasures of the world. Their fundamental tenets are, that nothing exists *absolutely* but God: that the human soul is an emanation from His essence, and will finally be restored to him: that the great object in this transitory state should be, a constant approach to the Eternal Spirit, and as perfect an union to the Divine nature as possible; for which reason all worldly attachments should be avoided, and, in

all we do, a spiritual object should be kept in view—

> "As a swimmer, without the impediment of garments, cleaves the water with greater ease."

When a Sufi poet speaks of love and beauty, a divine sentiment is always to be understood, however much the words employed may lead the uninitiated to imagine otherwise. This is the case with many sects of Protestants, and appears also in the sacred poems of our early writers, in those of the Fathers of the Church, and in the Song of Solomon, which is a remarkable instance.

The great end with these philosophers is to attain to a state of perfection in spirituality, so as to be at length totally absorbed in holy contemplation, to the exclusion of all worldly recollections or interests. This is in fact no more than was formerly sought by monastic devotees in the Catholic church; and it was the same belief and endeavour which produced so many saints and martyrs.

As religious enthusiasm, carried to the utmost height, is sure to—

> "O'erleap itself, and fall on the other side,"

the admirers of the Sufis carried their zeal beyond all bounds, and the *ultra-pious* added still greater mysticism to a belief which was already obscure enough. This has filled the deserts of India and Arabia with howling dervishes, *Yoghis*, *Sunnis*, and whole tribes of fanatics, who have run wild with ill-directed

devotion, and pass their lives standing on one leg or ceaselessly extending one arm, or with fixed eyes constantly regarding the sun till they lose their sight. Such as these have made their faith a jest, and such are described as perfect beings by those of their own sect who encourage such absurdity.

In a work, called "Exercise of the Soul," they are named as follows, their wisdom and their folly lauded alike:—

"He is both a Yoghi and a Sunnyasi, who performeth that which he ought to do, independent of the fruit thereof. To the Yoghi gold, iron, and stone are the same. The Yoghi constantly exerciseth the spirit in private, free from hope, free from perception. He planteth his own seat firmly on a spot undefiled, neither too high nor too low, and sitteth upon the sacred grass, which is called Koos, covered with a skin or a cloth. There he whose business is the restraining of his passions, should sit with his mind fixed on one object, alone, in the exercise of his devotion for the purification of his soul, *keeping his head, neck, and body steady, without motion,* his eyes fixed *on the point of his nose,* looking at no other place around."

When it is considered that the creed of the Sufis(2) is to adore *beauty,*(3) because the contemplation thereof leads the creature nearer to the Creator; and to venerate *wine,* because the power of its spirit is a symbol of

that of the Deity, the reader of the Persian poets will not be surprised at the mixture of sacred, and apparently profane, ideas so often found in the same poem.

Hafiz, himself a Sufi, has well expressed the sentiments of this visionary sect in the following lines, which will at once convey the substance of this mystical belief, so frequently and necessarily alluded to when the Persian poets are treated of:—

EARTHLY AND HEAVENLY LOVE:

A MYSTICAL POEM OF HAFIZ.

A being, formed like thee, of clay,
Destroys thy peace from day to day;
Excites thy waking hours with pain;
Consumes thy sleep with visions vain.
Thy mind is rapt, thy sense betrayed;
Thy head upon her foot is laid.
The teeming earth, the glowing sky,
Is nothing to her faintest sigh.

Thine eye sees only her; thy heart
Feels only her in every part.
Careless of censure, restless, lost,
By ceaseless wild emotions tost;
If she demand thy soul, 'tis given—
She is thy life, thy death, thy heaven.

Since a vain passion, based on air,
Subdues thee with a power so rare,
How canst thou marvel those who stray
Tow'rds the true path are led away,
Till, scarce the goal they can descry,
Whelmed in adoring mystery?

Life they regard not; for they live
In *Him* whose hands all being give:
The world they quit for *Him*, who made
Its wondrous light, its wondrous shade:
For *Him* all pleasures they resign,
And love *Him* with a love divine!

On the *cup-bearer*(4) gazing still,
The cup they break, the wine they spill.
From endless time their ears have rung
With words, by angel voices sung;
"Art thou not bound to God?" they cry;
And the blest "Yes," whole hosts reply.[5]

They seem unmoved, but ceaseless
thought
Works in their minds, with wisdom
fraught.
Their feet are earth, but souls of flame
Dwell in each unregarded frame.
Such power by steady faith they gain,
One yell would rend the rocks in twain;

One word the cities could o'erthrow,
And spread abroad despair and woe.
Like winds, unseen, they rove all ways;
Silent, like stone, they echo praise:
So rapt, so blest, so filled are they,
They know not night—they see not day!

So fair *He* seems, all things who made,
The forms he makes to them are shade;
And, if a beauteous shape they view,
'Tis His reflection shining through.

The wise cast not the pearl away,
Charmed with the shell, whose hues
 are gay;
To him *pure love* is only known,
Who leaves *both worlds*[6] for God alone.

It is necessary to explain, in some degree, the nature of the Sufi belief, in order that the reader, to become initiated, should not be startled at the singular expressions, which he is bound to comprehend as conveying a sacred meaning; otherwise, when the poet exclaims, in a mystical rapture—

"Sell this world *and the next* for a *cup of pure wine!*"

it might be imagined extraordinary, until he knows that by a "cup of pure wine" is meant "faith."

It must be confessed, that the following ode of Hafiz requires to be studied with more than ordinary attention, in order that the full meaning of its *devotional* fervour may be comprehended; otherwise, it might appear to the *unguarded* reader a mere Bacchanalian effusion, not unworthy of Anacreon!

ODE OF HAFIZ:

SAID TO BE EXPRESSIVE OF HOLY JOY AND EXULTATION.

Grapes of pure and glowing lustre!
May the hand that plucked each cluster
Never shake with age!
May the feet ne'er slip that press them!
Oh! 'tis rapture to possess them,
'Spite the chiding sage.

Call, call for wine, the goblet drain,
And scatter round spring's fairest flowers;
What wouldst thou more of fate obtain:
Where canst thou seek for brighter hours?

This was the earthly nightingale's first
lay;
What sayest thou to his precepts, Rose
of Day?

Oh! bring thy couch where countless
roses
The garden's gay retreat discloses;
There in the shade of waving boughs
recline,
Breathing rich odours, quaffing ruby
wine!

Thou, fairest rose of all, oh say,
For whom thy hundred leaves dost thou
display?
To what blest mortal wilt thou own
Such buds have sprung for him alone?

What have I now to ask?—here all
Life's choicest gifts to me belong;
Prudence and wisdom are but thrall,
The only friends are wine and song!

The religion of the Sufis appears to be a compound of the philosophy of Plato and Berkley: with Plato, they would perfectly agree in the following observation:—"For a thing of this kind cannot be expressed by words, like other disciplines, but by lasting familiarity and conjunction of life with this divine object, a bright light on a sudden, as

it were, leaping out of a fire, will illuminate the soul, and then preserve and nourish its splendour." Or with Socrates:—"There is but one eternal, immutable, uniform beauty, in contemplation of which our sovereign happiness does consist, and therefore a true lover considers beauty and proportion as so many steps and degrees from which he may ascend from the particular to the general; from all that is lovely in feature, or regular in proportion, or charming in sound, to the general fountain of all perfection. And if you are so much transported with the sight of beautiful persons as to wish neither to eat nor drink, but to pass your whole life in their conversation, to what ecstasy would it raise you to behold the original beauty, not filled up with flesh and blood, or varnished with a fading mixture of colours, and the rest of mortal trifles and fooleries, but separate, uniform, and divine."(6)

The Sufis suppose that it is an anxious desire of the soul for union that is the cause of love: thus they compare the soul to a bird confined in a cage, panting for liberty, and pining at its separation from the divine essence.

FAVOURITE SUBJECTS OF EASTERN POETS.

THERE are three principal love stories in the East, which, from the earliest times, have been the themes of every poet. Scarcely one of the mighty masters of Persian literature but has adopted and added celebrity to those beautiful and interesting legends, which can never be too often repeated to an oriental ear. They are,—"the History of Khosru and Shireen;" "the Loves of Yussuf and Zuleika;" and "the Misfortunes of Mejnoun and Leila." So powerful is the charm attached to these stories, that it appears to have been considered almost an imperative duty on the poets to compose a new version of the old, familiar, and beloved traditions. Even down to a modern date, the Persians have not deserted their favourites, and these celebrated themes of verse re-appear, from time to time, under new auspices.

Each of these poems is expressive of a peculiar character: that of Khosru and Shireen may be considered exclusively the Persian romance; that of Mejnoun, the Arabian; and that of Yussuf and Zuleika, *the Sacred.* The first presents a picture of happy love and female excellence in Shireen.

Mejnoun is a representation of unfortunate attachment, carried to madness. The third romance contains the ideal of perfection in Yussuf (*i.e.* Joseph), and the most passionate and imprudent love in Zuleika (the wife of Potiphar); and exhibits in strong relief the power of love and beauty, the mastery of mind, the weakness of overwhelming passion, and the victorious spirit of holiness and triumph of prophecy—for it is said that Yussuf's beauty was foreshown to Adam as a type of his prophetic power. The names of three great poets are identified with these subjects; and each has peculiarly succeeded in one: to Nizami is accorded the palm, for the best poem on "the Loves of Khosrû and Shireen;" to Jami, for those of "Yussuf and Zuleika;" and to Hatifi, for the "*most* musical, *most* melancholy" version of the sad tale of "Mejnoun and Leila," the Romeo and Juliet of the East. These are generally called the Romantic Poets, as the others are the Mystic and the Historic.

The first of Persian poets, the father of his language, the Homer of his country, is the illustrious Ferdusi, whose name is known in every nation, and consecrated to eternal fame in his own. He is the head of the Historic school.

FERDUSI.

When the renowned conqueror, Shah Mahmoud, reigned in Ghusni, supreme ruler of Zablistan and great part of Khorassan, he entertained several poets in his palace, amongst

whom the most distinguished was Abul Kasim Mansûr, called *Ferdusi*, or "Paradise," from the exquisite beauty of his compositions. The poet had been attracted from his village by the fame of the sultan's magnificence, for he had spent fifty years of his life in his native place, Shadàb, in the province of Tûs, in Khorassan, without seeking reputation beyond; his name, however, had spread far and wide, and the sultan heard with pride that so great a luminary had come to shed its lustre over his court, which wanted but that to dazzle the whole world.

The gorgeous gates of sandal-wood(8) which he had transported to his palace from the idol temple of Somnât, he thought alone worthy to expand to let in such a guest as Ferdusi; and the unrivalled city of palaces which he had created, in the midst of which stood the abode which he thought worthy of the name of "the Celestial Bride," he considered never so much honoured as when the "Minstrel of the Garden of Paradise" set his foot within its walls. Neither of his majestic Bala Hissar, the emblem of his power, nor of his glorious *minars*, which remain to this day memorials of his greatness, was Mahmoud more proud, than that Ferdusi was, by his command, composing, in his faultless

verse, a history of the monarchs of Persia, his predecessors.

No reward then appeared to him too great to offer, to induce the poet to undertake the task, no promises too splendid to excite him. "Write, unequalled one," cried he, "and for every thousand couplets a thousand pieces of gold shall be thine."

But Ferdusi wrote for fame and not for profit, though he was poor, and depended only on his own exertions; he resolved to accept of no reward till he had completed the work he had undertaken, and for *thirty years* he studied and laboured that his poem might be worthy of eternal fame. In this he succeeded, but the patience of the Shah was exhausted, his enthusiasm was gone, his liberality had faded away, and when the sixty thousand couplets of the *Shah Namah*, or "Book of Kings," was ended, there was a pause, which brought to the poet disappointment, and to the monarch such everlasting disgrace as has obliterated all his triumphs.

What must have been the poet's feelings, when, after a life of labour, of unabated enthusiasm, unwearied diligence, and undiminished zeal, though he had by this time reached the age of eighty years, he found the announcement of his great epic's completion coldly received! Incautious, even more than is usual with his rhyming race, was the

hapless Ferdusi, to trust to the continuance of a king's patronage for so long a period. Enemies had thickened round him while he was absorbed in his great work, his friends had disappeared, his admirers had dropped off, and the unfortunate minstrel woke from his protracted dream to find himself—

"A very beggar and a wretch indeed."

There is something that sounds like Eastern exaggeration in the term of years named, and the age of the poet, but all historians have so recounted the event. Thirty years is a long period to make a monarch and the public wait for a promised work, and it a little diminishes the pity which would be naturally felt for the author when the disappointment of the patron is considered.

Ferdusi sent a copy, exquisitely written, of his "Shah Namah" to the sultan, who received it unmoved: the grand vizier uttered deprecatory remarks, the courtiers yawned, and the aged poet's long-looked-for work was treated with contempt.

The astonished author of an unrivalled composition, of the value of which he was well assured, was startled at the silence of his royal patron; he began to reflect on his position, and the fact of his having for a series of years neglected all his worldly affairs in order to give himself up entirely

to study, became painfully evident. He could scarcely believe in the meanness and ingratitude which could thus neglect him: but still no notice was taken. At length the following lines reached the ear of Mahmoud, and he began to fear the poet's fire was not all extinct:—

'Tis said our monarch's liberal mind
Is, like the ocean, unconfined.
Happy are they who prove it so!
'Tis not for me that truth to know.
I've plunged within its waves, 'tis true,
But not a single pearl could view.

Shamed, piqued, and offended at this freedom, the sultan ordered sixty thousand small pieces of money (dirrhims) to be sent to the author of the "Shah Namah," instead of the gold which he had won. Ferdusi was in the public bath at the time the money arrived, and his rage and amazement exceeded all bounds when he found himself thus insulted. "How!" he exclaimed, "does the sultan imagine that thirty years' labour and study are to be rewarded with dirrhims?" So saying, he distributed the paltry sum amongst the attendants of the bath and the slave who brought it.

At first his mind was overwhelmed with grief and vexation; all the airy dreams he had formed of devoting the promised sum to the embellishment of his native place, endowing a hospital. and becoming a general benefactor to his province, were at once dispersed, and the fame for which he had toiled appeared to have vanished also; but in a short time his spirit rose superior to sorrow, and his former energy and dignity returned. He called up every feeling of contempt and bitterness of which his sensitive nature was capable, and resolved to pour the accumulated torrent on the head of the degraded sovereign who had deceived and insulted him. The circumstances of Mahmoud's birth left him open to contumely, for though his father, Sebectighin, rose to empire from his valour and brilliant qualities, there was a blot in his escutcheon not to be forgotten, particularly under such provocation —he had been *a slave!*

The excited poet relieved his mind by a satire full of stinging invective, and caused it to be transmitted to the favourite vizier who had instigated the Sultan against him; it was carefully sealed up, with directions that it should be read to Mahmoud on some occasion when his mind was perturbed with

affairs of state and his temper ruffled, as it was a poem likely to afford him entertainment. Ferdusi having thus prepared his vengeance, quitted the ungrateful court, without leave-taking, and he was safely arrived in Mazanderan when news reached him that his lines had fully answered the purpose he had intended they should do. Mahmoud had heard and trembled, and too late discovered that he had ruined his own reputation for ever.

There is in this celebrated satire a remarkable expression, singularly like that of Wolsey:—"Had I written as many verses in praise of Mahommed and Ali as I have composed for King Mahmoud, they would have showered a hundred blessings upon me!"

The following is part of the satire:—

FERDUSI'S SATIRE ON MAHMOUD OF GUSNI.

* * * * *

In Mahmoud who shall hope to find
One virtue to redeem his mind?
A mind no gen'rous transports fill;
To truth, to faith, to justice chill!
Son of a slave!—His diadem
In vain may glow with many a gem,

Exalted high in power and place,
Outbursts the meanness of his race!

Take, of some bitter tree, a shoot—
In Eden's garden plant the root;
Let waters from th' Eternal spring
Amidst the boughs their incense fling;
Though bathed and showered with
honey dew,
Its native baseness springs to view;—
After long care and anxious skill,
The fruit it bears is bitter still.

Place thou within the spicy nest,
Where the bright phœnix loves to rest,
A raven's egg—and, mark it well,
When the vile bird has chipped its shell,
Though fed with grains from trees that
grow
Where Salsebil's sweet waters flow,
Though airs from Gabriel's wings may
rise
To fan the cradle where he lies,
Though long these patient cares endure,
It proves, at last, a bird impure!

A viper, nurtured in a bed
Where roses all their beauties spread;
Though nourished with the drops alone
Of waves that spring from Allah's
throne,
Is still a poisonous reptile found,
And with its venom taints the ground.

Bear, from the forest's gloom, to light,
The dark and sullen bird of night;
Amidst thy garden's sweetest bowers
Place him with summer's fairest flowers;
Let hyacinths and roses glow
And round his haunts their garlands
throw;
Scarce does the sun in glory rise,
And streak with gold the laughing skies,
He turns him from the day in pain,
And seeks his gloomy woods again.

This truth our holy Prophet sung—
"All things return from whence they
sprung."
Pass near the merchant's fragrant wares,
Thy robe the scent of amber bears;
Go where the smith his trade pursues,
Thy mantle's folds have dusky hues.

Let not those deeds thy mind amaze
A mean and worthless man displays;
An Ethiop's skin becomes not white;
Thou canst not change the clouds of night.
What poet shall attempt to sing
The praises of a vicious king.

Had'st thou, degenerate prince, but shown
One single virtue as thy own;
Had honour—faith—adorned thy brow,
My fortunes had not sunk, as now;
But thou had'st gloried in my fame,
And built thyself a deathless name.

Oh, Mahmoud! though thou fear'st me not,
Heaven's vengeance will not be forgot;
Shrink, tyrant! from my words of fire,
And tremble at a poet's ire!

The only part of this invective which was undeserved was Ferdusi's allusion to the father of the sultan, who merited more from one who could appreciate virtue than to be merely named as "*a slave*." What the character of Sebectighin was the following anecdotes will show:—

"He was at first only a private horseman, in the service of the sultan whom he suc-

ceeded on the throne; and, being of an active and vigorous disposition, used to hunt every day in the forest. It happened once, when he was thus amusing himself, that he saw a deer grazing with her young fawn, upon which, spurring his horse, he seized the fawn, and binding its legs, threw it across the saddle and turned his face towards home. When he had ridden a little way, he looked behind, and beheld the mother of the fawn following him, and exhibiting every mark of extreme affliction. The soul of the hunter melted within him; he untied the feet of the fawn, and generously restored it to liberty. The happy mother turned towards the wilderness, and often looked back upon him, the tears dropping fast from her eyes. That night he saw an apparition in his dreams, which said to him, 'The kindness and compassion which thou hast this day shown to a distressed animal has been approved of in the presence of God; therefore, in the records of Providence the kingdom of Ghusni is marked as a reward against thy name. Let not greatness destroy thy virtue, but continue thy benevolence to man.'"(9)

It is related in a moral, metaphysical, and philosophical work, called "Masir ul Maluck,"(10) that Mahmoud, when prince, having

built a pleasure house in an elegant garden, near the city of Ghusni, invited his father to a magnificent entertainment which he had prepared for him. The son, in the joy of his heart, desired to know his father's opinion as to his taste in the structure which had been lauded as inimitable. The king, to the great disappointment of Mahmoud, told him "that he looked upon the whole as a bauble, which any of his subjects might have raised by means of wealth; but that it was the business of a prince to erect the more durable structure of good fame, which might stand for ever to be imitated, but never to be equalled."

The great poet Nizami makes, upon this sayiug, the following reflection:—"Of all the gorgeous palaces that Mahmoud built we now find not one stone upon another, but the edifice of fame, as he was told by his father, still triumphs over time, and is established on a lasting foundation."

The "Shah Namah" contains the history of the kings of Persia, from the reign of the first king, Kaiûmers, to the death of Yesdijerd, the last monarch of the Sassanian race, who was deprived of his kingdom, A. D. 641—A. H. 21, by the invasion of the Arabs during the caliphat of Omar.

In the course of this period three dynas-

ties sat upon the Persian throne. The first, called the Pishdadian, lasted 2441 years; the second, the Kaianian, commenced with Kai-kobád, and lasted 732 years. Alexander the Great (or Sikander) is included in this race, and is, by the poet, represented as the son of Dârab, king of Persia, by the daughter of Failakus (Philip of Macedon).

After the death of Sikander, Persia was divided, during 200 years, into a number of petty monarchies, called the "Confederacy of the kings." The Sassanian race of princes succeeded these, and ruled over Persia for 501 years.

As a history, the great poem of Ferdusi is now of little value; but it contains some of the ancient Persian traditions, and the power and eloquence of its verse are unrivalled.

Persian biographers all agree in asserting that Mahmoud placed in the hands of Ferdusi the ancient chronicles of the kings of Persia, from which it is supposed that he derived his historical narratives. That such fragments existed we have the testimony of the Book of Esther,(11) besides those of Herodotus and Ctesius.

A story is often repeated respecting the origin of Ferdusi's work, which is perhaps founded on truth, but has been much doubted.

One book, besides the fables of Bidpai, or Pilpai, is said to have escaped from the burning of the Alexandrian library, namely, a history of Persia, in the *Pehlevian* or vulgar dialect, supposed to have been compiled by order of Nishurvan or Kosroës who reigned till near the close of the sixth century. Saad, one of Omar's generals, found the volume, after the victory at Cadessia, and preserved it as a curiosity; it passed through several hands, was translated into several dialects of Persia, and finally was seen by the great poet, who derived from it the materials of his poem.

After his satire had been read by Shah Mahmoud, the poet feared to remain too long in one place: he sought shelter in the court of the Caliph of Bagdad, Kadi Billah, in whose honour he added a thousand couplets to the "Shah Namah," and who rewarded him with the sixty thousand gold dinars, which had been withheld by Mahmoud.

These lines occur amongst his compliments:—

TO THE KING.

Nor vice nor virtue long endure,
Then keep thy conscience ever pure;

Wealth, power, and gorgeous works will
seem
At the last hour an idle dream;
But a great name no time can steal:
Despise not then the sage's zeal.

'Twas Firidoun,(12) by Heav'n ordained,
Who first the world from vice restrained:
Great Firidoun, the blest and wise,
Was yet no child of paradise.
Not musk, or ambergris—but clay;
But truth and justice owned his sway:
Obedient, faithful, generous found,
His virtues by success were crowned:
Like him, by virtue gain renown,
And reign another Feridoun.

Meantime Ferdusi's poem of "Jussuf," and his magnificent verses on several subjects, had revived the fame which his studies had so long allowed to lie dormant, and Shah Mahmoud's "late remorse awoke." He had lost the greatest ornament of the age, and another monarch could boast of having done him right. He pretended to have discovered that his vizier had deceived him in attributing impiety to Ferdusi, and

he at once sacrificed that favourite, dismissing him with disgrace. He had, however, previously sent to Kadir Billah to command the poet's absence from his court, and he had retired to his native Tûs. Thinking, by a tardy act of liberality, to repair his former meanness, Mahmoud dispatched to the author of the "Shah Namah" the sixty thousand pieces he had promised, a robe of state, and many apologies and expressions of friendship and admiration, requesting his return, and professing great sorrow for their dissensions.

The poet, however, was "past the tyrant's stroke," and senseless of his future generosity. He was dead!—having expired in his native town, full of years and honours, surrounded by his friends and kindred.

His family, knowing his wishes, devoted the whole sum to the benevolent purposes he had intended, namely, the erection of public buildings, and the general improvement of the place of his birth. The date of his death is given as in A.D. 1020—A.H. 411, and his age as eighty-nine.

The language of Ferdusi may be considered as the purest specimen of the older Persian dialect, called *Deri*, Arabic words being rarely introduced; whereas Sadi, Jami,

Hafiz, and others, have adopted Arabic expressions without reserve. The softness of the *Deri*, in the opinion of the Asiatics, has occasioned the popular saying, "that it is the language of Heaven," together with the Arabic idioms. "God," it is said, "communicates his milder mandates in the delicate accents of the first, whilst his sterner commands are delivered in the rapid utterance of the other."

There are many episodes in the "Shah Namah" of great beauty. The following is the rhapsody of Byzun, a young prince, the *Paris* of Ferdusi's poem, who had reason to repent his adventure with the daughter of Afrasiab, for he was made captive, and only rescued by the valour of Rostam,—another *Rolando*, the great hero of the poem, of whom the most extraordinary feats are related, and who is, probably, the original of many of those who figure in the histories of knight-errantry.

The prince, sailing by the gardens of Afrasiab's palace, beholds his daughters wandering amidst the bowers, and, excited by a perfidious friend, forms the somewhat ungallant plan of carrying them off: he is thus addressed by his companion, Girgin, the traitor:—

THE GARDENS OF THE DAUGHTERS OF AFRASIAB.

FROM THE "SHAH NAMAH" OF FERDUSI.

Look forth, companions, cast afar your eyes
Where yonder many-coloured plain extends:
Ah! in my breast what sweet emotions rise!
Behold how each soft charm of nature blends
Into one glorious whole,—grove, mead, and stream,—
A fit abode for heroes it might seem!

The tender silken grass invites the tread;
With musky odour breathes the fanning air;
Pure waters glide along their perfumed bed,
As though the rose gave them her essence rare;
The lily stalk bends with her fragrant flower,
The lustre of the rose glads ev'ry bower.

The pheasant walks with graceful pace
along,
Soft doves and mournful nightingales
are nigh,
Charming the silence with a mingled
song,
And murmurs from the cypress-boughs
reply.

Oh! never, never,—long as time shall
last,—
May shadows o'er these beauteous
scenes be cast!
Still may they in eternal splendour
glow,
And be like Paradise, as they are now!

There, in gay groups, beneath the
trees, beside
Those streams that through the vales
in music glide,
Lovely as fairies, beautiful as day,
Are maids who wander on in sportive
play.
Afrasiab's daughter there, Manizha
bright,
Makes the whole garden—like the sun
—all light.

Not less majestic, midst the graceful
throng,
Her sister, fair Zittara,(13) sweet and
young!
She decks the plain with beauty as
she goes,
Before her shrink, ashamed, the
jasmine and the rose!

And there are Turkish maids that near
them rove,
With forms like cypress-boughs(14)
that zephyrs move;
Locks dark as musk,—and see! each
veil discloses
Eyes *filled with sleep*, and cheeks all
full of roses!

Shall we not, friends, turn for a single
day,
Check, for so great a prize, our onward
way?
Steal to those bowers, make the bright
nymphs our own,
And bring the lovely prey to Khosrou's
throne!

Another episode of the "Shah Namah" relates the "loves of the Fair-haired Zal, or Zalzar, and Rudava." This hero is a very favourite one, as is his father, Sâm Nerimân, and his son is the famous Rostam, the conqueror of the Dives, or evil spirits. Rostam is the father of Sohrâb, an interesting young hero, whose tragical death is one of the most admired portions of the "Shah Namah."

Another great hero of the "Shah Namah," whose fabulous adventures are a favourite theme with eastern writers, is Jamshid, the great monarch who owned the famous "jewel," so often named by the poets.

He is supposed to have flourished 800 years before the Christian era, and it was he who built "the famed Persepolis," or city of Istakar, the ruins of which, called Chelminar, or the Forty Pillars, still exist, and are often visited by adventurous travellers.(15)

During his reign sickness and death were unknown, tranquillity and happiness rewarded the virtues of his people. The angel Siroush descended from Heaven to visit the monarch, whose worth excited admiration in "both worlds," and a robe and enchanted girdle were left him by the celestial guest. He was gifted with a ray

of divine light (like Moses), which rendered his form so luminous, that once, when descending Mount Alborz (from time immemorial the seat of fire-temples), the people imagined that there were two suns in the world. His magic *ring* and throne possessed extraordinary powers: his *goblet* was wondrous.(16)

"Who knows," says the bard, "what is become of the goblet of Jam?"(17)

He was beloved, feared, obeyed, and happy; but his human nature began at last to predominate over his better and more exalted feelings. Pride crept into his heart, and overturned the work of years: he became puffed up with self-estimation, and forgot from whence he derived his greatness, till the anger of God was kindled against him. The minds of his subjects underwent a change; they revolted, and drove him from his kingdom, and, an outcast and wanderer, he roamed the earth for a *hundred years.*

The following is a scene in which he is represented as meeting with the daughter of King Gureng, who became his wife; and, his probation past, he was restored to his kingdom and his power, "a wiser and a better man," his youth having suffered no dimi-

nution. The incidents and metaphors are from Ferdusi, but I have merely ventured on a *paraphrase*, not a translation.

JAMSHID'S COURTSHIP.

A weary traveller sat to grieve
By Gureng's gate, at early eve,
Where fragrant gardens, filled with
bloom,
Cast forth their breath of soft perfume,
And wandering o'er his brow and face,
Relieved him for a moment's space.
But sorrow weighed upon his breast,
And dimmed the lustre of his eye;
He had no home—he sought but rest,
And laid him down to sleep—or die!

* * * * *

King Gureng's lovely daughter lies
Beside a fountain gently playing;
She marks not though the waves be
bright,
Nor in the roses takes delight:
And though her maids new games
devise,
Invent fresh stories to surprise,
She heeds not what each fair is
saying:
Her fav'rite's voice has lost its spell,
The raven charms her ear as well!

But hark! soft whispers, questions gay,
Amongst the female train prevail;
A young slave, beautiful as day,
Blushes while she tells her tale.

"Nay, mock me not,—no face so fair
Was seen on earth till now:
Though on his cheek are hues of care,
And grief has marked his brow:
Ah! cruel maids, ye smile and doubt,
While the poor stranger faints without!"

The princess heard: "Go hence," she
cried,
"And be the stranger's wants supplied:
Let him beneath our shades repose,
And find a refuge for his woes."

The ready damsels straight obey,
And seek the trav'ller where he lay.
"Arise, fair youth, the wine-cup waits,
And roses bloom within our gates,
The tulip bids thee welcome be,
And the young moon has risen for
thee."

* * * * *

Meanwhile the princess mused alone,
And thus she sighed, in mournful
tone:—

"Alas! they told me 'twas my fate;
But ah! I feel 'tis all too late:
I cannot now believe—'twas vain—
That dream can never come again!
And yet my nurse—who knows full well[18]
Each herb and ev'ry potent spell,
From the cold wave can conjure fire,
And quell the mighty dragon's ire,
From stones soft dewdrops can distil,
And awe the *Dives* with wondrous skill,
Knows ev'ry star—has said that mine
Glowed with an aspect all divine.
That he, whose image is imprest,
As if by magic on my breast,
Whose portrait cheers my solitude,—
The mighty Jamshid, great and good;
Of whose rare beauty they recount,
When he descended from the mount,
So bright the lustre, those who saw
Proclaimed two suns, and knelt in awe;
For whom the chains of death were riven,
Whom angels clothed in robes of heaven;
That prince whose power was far above
All those who vainly seek my love;
She said he should be mine—vain thought!
Is he not fall'n, to ruin brought;

His kingdom gone, his fortune crost,
And he, perhaps, for ever lost!"

She ceased, when lo! the laughing train
Came dancing back, with song and jest,
And leading, in a flowery chain,
The stranger youth,(19) their welcome guest.

* * * * *

'Twas thus they met, they met and gazed,
Struck by the self-same power, amazed;
Confused, admiring, pleased, distressed,
As passion rose in either breast.

The princess spoke, soft as a bird
In Spring to some dear partner sighing;
And the fair stranger's words were heard,
Sweet as the *bul-bul's* notes replying.

Her long hair, streaming to the ground,
With odours fills the air around;
She moves to music and to song,
As the wild partridge steps along.

She leads him to her jasmine bower,
Midst fountains, birds, and blossoms sweet;
And her attendant maidens shower
The sparkling wave upon his feet:

Two doves sat near, and softly mourned,
And both their hearts each sigh returned.

With wine, and verse, and wit awhile,
The happy moments they beguile;
But clouds passed o'er the fair one's brow,
She feared, she doubted,—"Go!" she cried;
"Bring here my long-unbended bow,
And let my former art be tried.
Two birds are seated on one tree,
Tell me which bird my mark shall be;
And thou shalt know a woman's skill
Can make all captive to her will!"

The stranger smiled with haughty look,
As from her hand the bow he took:
"Thy fame," he said, "to me is known;
Valour, like beauty, is thy own:
But know, though bold in camp and field,
Woman to man is forced to yield.
Princess, a boon! If I have wit
And skill the female bird to hit,
Shall she who makes these groves divine,
She whom I most admire, be mine?"

She blushed assent—the arrow flew;
The female bird mounts to the skies;
His shaft has struck her pinions through,
And fluttering on the ground she lies.

The fair one's eyes with triumph shine:
"The son of Tahúmers I see!
For never yet could hand but mine
Bend that charmed bow—'tis he—
'tis he!"

So spake her heart. "Give me the bow!"
She said aloud; "if true my aim,
Let him who seeks me take me now,
No better boon my hopes can claim."

My tale is told. Ye lovers, say,
Can ye not guess the blissful close?
How Jamshid won a bride that day,
And found a balm for all his woes.

Tahúmers, or Tahmúras, was a great hero, as well as his son; he received from the Simorgh (a fabulous Persian bird, of magical power) a present of some of her feathers, which is said to have given rise to the fashion of plumed helmets. This prince

was called Banivand, *armed at all points*, and Diwband, chainer of Dives.

The mystics called the divinity *Simorgh*, and *Anca;* numerous fables are told of each, and they are sometimes said to be the same. There is a Persian saying, "All people have a proverb of the Anca, to express that which is spoken of and not seen." One poet, speaking of a miser, says, "His bread is like the Anca-Mogreb, which is painted on the carpet of kings, and of which men have made proverbs, but have never seen it. It is a figure which neither passes nor remains." M. Garcin de Tassy gives some curious notes on this extraordinary bird:—"It is known only by name, and so called from having a white line round the neck like a collar; some say because of the *length of the neck* (this is not unlike the antediluvian wonders of geologists). It is said, that the inhabitants of the city of Res had a prophet named Hantala, and there was in their country a mountain called Damaj, a mile high. There came there a very large bird, with a very long neck, of beautiful and divers colours. This bird was accustomed to pounce on all the birds of that mountain, and eat them up. One day he was hungry, and birds were scarce, so he pounced

on a child, and carried it off; he is called Anca-Mogreb, because he carries off the prey he seizes. He afterwards pounced on a young girl, and putting her between his two smaller wings (for he has four on each side), bore her away. The people complained to their prophet, and he said, "My God, deliver us from this bird! prevent it from re-producing, and abandon it to misfortune."

Soon after this the Anca was struck with a thunderbolt. Mahomed is reported to have said, that, at the time of Moses, God created a female bird called Anca; it had eight wings, *and bore the figure of a man.* God gave it a portion of everything, and afterwards created it a male. "Then God made this revelation to Moses (to whom be peace), I have created two extraordinary birds, and have assigned for their nourishment the wild beasts which are round Jerusalem. I have made you familiar with them, and I have given them over and above what I have accorded to the children of Israel."

But the species multiplied; and when Moses was dead they went to the land of Najd and Hejaz, and never ceased to devour the wild beasts, and to carry off children, till the time when Khaled, son

of Sénan Absi, was prophet, between the time of Christ and Mahomed. It was then that these birds were complained of. Khalid invoked God, and God did not permit them to multiply, and their race became extinct."

Although Ferdusi holds the first place amongst the poets of Persia, he has himself mentioned that he is indebted for some passages in his historical poem to two poets who lived before him. These are Roduki and Dukiki, who appear to have both commenced a poetical version of the history of Persia. Of Roduki he speaks with respect, but criticises the other without mercy, although he condescended to adopt much of his composition.

It is related of Roduki, that the prince under whom he lived, having removed his court from Bokhara to Herât, became so attached to the latter city that he delayed his return, much to the regret of his courtiers, who employed the powers of the poet to induce the monarch to give up his new passion, and restore them to their homes and friends. Roduki fully entered into their views, and the following verses, sung with great feeling to the *barbut*, or viol, on which instrument he was a skilful performer, accomplished the end desired, and the prince,

Umir Nussar, once again took the route to Bokhara.

THE REGRETS OF BOKHARA.

The gale, whose breath such joy imparts,
Comes from that gentle stream
Where they reside, to whom our hearts
Return in mem'ry's dream:
The precious odour that its wings convey
Is their regret for us—so far away!

The sands are rough along that shore
Where glides our native Amû's stream;
But when we tread its banks once more,
Like velvet those rude sands will seem.
Oh, pitying Oxus! let thy waves divide,
And yield us passage down thy opening tide!

All hail, Bokhara, land of flowers!
Our prince moves proudly on;
He goes to glad thy sunny bowers,
He asks thy smile alone.
The waving cypress seeks his native groves,
The rising moon the firmament it loves.

ESSEDI OF TUS.

Essedi of Tûs, in Khorassan, is distinguished as having been the master of the great Ferdusi. He held the first place as poet at the court of the Shah Mahmoud of Ghusni, until his fame was eclipsed by the lustre of that of his celebrated pupil. The Shah had several times required of Essedi to arrange the historial record of kings, which he declined, pleading his great age and the labour of so extensive an undertaking; he, however, recommended the execution of this important work to Ferdusi. When the latter, after his many cares and wanderings, returned to his native province of Tûs, his health having failed him, he feared that the end of his career was approaching, and he reflected with infinite pain that his immortal "Shah Namah" was uncompleted. To his aged master the illustrious pupil communicated his sorrow, and his fears that no poet after

him would put the finishing hand to his task. Essedi, in order to afford him comfort, assured him that should he survive he would devote himself to the performance of that duty.

"But alas! my master," said the desponding Ferdusi, "you are already very aged—how then will you be able to do this?"

"If it please God," answered the aged poet, "I shall complete it." At these words he quitted his pupil, and in the course of that night and the following day he composed no less than four thousand verses; thus concluding the great epic poem which conferred immortality on his beloved pupil, to whom he triumphantly brought his work, and so much was he amazed, gratified, and enchanted, that his health and spirits revived, and death was for a time averted.

Essedi must have been extremely aged when he achieved this extraordinary triumph, for the work itself had been declined by him, in the first place, on account of his advanced years, and no less than thirty of his pupil's life had been passed in its composition.

The most celebrated of the other works of Essedi is his dispute between Day and Night.

Day and Night, who each can yield
Joy and solace to the earth,
Thus contented for the field,
Claiming both the highest birth—
Night spoke frowningly:—"'Twas I
Who from all eternity
Ruled the chaos of the world,
When in dim confusion hurled.
The fervent prayer is heard at night;
Devotion flies day's glaring light.
'Twas night, the Mount when Moses left;
At night was Lot avenged by fire:
At night the moon our prophet cleft,
And saw Heaven's might revealed entire.
The lovely moon for thirty days
Spreads radiant glory from afar:
Her charms for ever night displays,
Crowned, like a queen, with many a star:
Her seal-bearer is Heav'n, a band
Of planets wait on her command.
Day can but paint the skies with blue,
Night's starry hosts amaze the view.
Man measures time but by the moon;
Night shrouds what day reveals too soon.

Day is with toil and care oppressed,
Night comes, and with her, gentle rest.
Day, busy still, no praise can bring,
All night the saints their anthems sing;
Her shade is cast by Gabriel's wing!

The moon is pure, the sun's broad face
Dark and unsightly spots deface:
The sun shines on with changeless glare,
The moon is ever new and fair."

Day rose, and smiled in high disdain:—
"Cease all this boasting, void and vain;
The Lord of Heaven, and earth, and thee,
Gave me a place more proud than thine,
And men with joy my rising see,
And hail the beams that round me shine.
The holy pilgrim takes by day
To many a sacred shine his way;
By day the pious fast and pray;
And solemn feasts are held by day.

On the *last day* the world's career is run,
As on the *first* its being was begun.

Thou, Night, art friendly, it may be,
For lovers fly for help to thee.
When do the sick thy healing see?

Thieves, by thy aid, may scathless prowl;
Sacred to thee the bat and owl;
And, led by thee, pale spectres grimly
howl!

I sprang from Heaven, from dust art
thou,
Light crowns my head with many a
gem;
The collier's cap is on thy brow—
For thee a fitting diadem.
My presence fills the world with joy;
Thou com'st all comfort to annoy.
I am a Moslem—white my vest:
Thou a vile thief, in sable drest.
Out negro-face!—dar'st thou compare
Thy cheeks with mine, so purely fair?
Those 'hosts of stars,' thy boast and pride,
How do they rush their sparks to hide,
How to their native darkness run,
When, in his glory, comes the sun!

True, death was *first;* but, tell me, who
Thinks life least worthy of the two?
'Tis by the moon the Arab counts;
The lordly Persian tells his year
By the bright sun, that proudly mounts
The yielding heavens, so wide and clear.

The sun is ruddy, strong, and hale;
The moon is sickly, wan, and pale.
Methinks 'twas ne'er in story told
That silver had the worth of gold!
The moon, a slave, is bowed and bent,
She knows her light is only lent;
She hurries on, the way to clear
Till the great Shah himself appear.

What canst thou, idle boaster, say
To prove the night excels the day?
If stubborn still, let Him decide
With whom all truth and law abide;
Let Nasur Ahmed, wise as great,
Pronounce, and give to each his state."

UNSURI.

It is related that, soon after the illustrious Ferdusi came into Persia, it happened on a certain day that Unsuri was sitting on the banks of a river with two companions, the poets Firoki and Asjudi, when seeing a stranger approach, whose dress had nothing distinguished in its appearance, they agreed amongst themselves to puzzle the new comer and be merry at his expense. They proposed to recite three lines of poetry, each taking one line, and to demand the fourth of the stranger, who, in case of failure, was not to be permitted to remain in their society. Unsuri was the first to address Ferdusi (for it was no other) in an uncourteous tone, with the remark that none but poets should seek the com-

pany of poets; to which his future master modestly replied, "I also know a little of poetry." Unsuri then rose, and recited the first line of a stanza, as agreed on:—

The moon, my fair, is pallid where thou
art,

Asjudi continued:—

The colours of the rose to thine are
pale;

Firoki went on:—

Thine eye can pierce, through armour,
to the heart:

The three poets here paused and, with contemptuous glances, desired the stranger to supply the concluding line, convinced that they required an impossibility from an obscure and probably unlearned person; but Ferdusi, without hesitation, instantly finished the verse thus:—

As Giû's swift arrow shivered Poshun's
mail.

Not only were the three poets astonished at his readiness, but ashamed of their incivility,

and also of their inability to understand the allusion in the line of their conqueror, who explained it by reciting to them, now become attentive listeners, several parts of the "Shah Namah," with which they were delighted, and Unsuri found that in the contemned stranger was a mighty master, whose genius had already created the work which Sultan Mahmoud had proposed to himself, having chosen him from seven contemporaries.

From this period, contempt was changed to respect and admiration, nor did jealousy of his great rival ever find a place in the breast of the generous poet.

TOGRAY

TOGRAY[21] was a native of Ispahan, and became so celebrated as a writer, that the title of "Honour of Writers" is sometimes given him: he was engaged in the chancellor's office, whose business it is to trace, in large characters, on the diplomas, the peculiar cypher, called Togray,[22] generally written in a fine ornamented hand. This esteemed accomplishment, in which the poet excelled, was one

of the causes of the enmity of Sultan Mahmoud's vizir, the same who was the enemy of Ferdusi.

Togray was vizir to the sultan of Moussûl, who was conquered by Mahmoud, and, being taken, the poet was put to death, from envy, by the rival vizir. A short time before, he had written some lines on the birth of a son, which show what his age was at the period:—

"This child, born to me in my old age, has charmed my eyes, and inspired me, at the same time, with grave reflections, for *fifty-seven* years leave traces on the face of the hardest stone."

A collection of the poems of Togray has been made, the most celebrated of which is that called Lamiya-al-ajem, so called because all the verses terminate with the letter *lam*;[23] the Persian *al-ajem* is added, to distinguish it from an ancient poem of the same name, by another author.

The poet was addicted to alchemy, and wrote a treatise on the philosopher's stone.

EULOGY ON KASHMEER.

Hail to the city from whose bowers—
The glowing paradise of flowers!—
Soft zephyrs waft the rose's breath,
By moonlit night and blushing morn,
Even to the ruby, hid beneath
The golden hills of Badakhshân![24]

Whose gale with perfume-laden wing,
O'er Arab deserts hovering,
A tint as radiant can bestow
As beams that in the emerald glow.

Upon thy mountains fresh and green
The velvet turf is scarcely seen,
So close the jasmines twine around
And strew, with star-like flowers, the
 ground,
The ruddy glow of sunset lies
Within thy rich pomegranate's eyes;
And flashing 'midst the tulip-beds,
A blaze of glory round them sheds.

Night dwells amidst thy spicy groves;
Thy saffron fields the star of morning
 loves;
Thy violets have tales of eyes as fair;
Thy hyacinths of waving, dusky hair;
Thy glittering sunflowers make the
 year all spring;
Thy bees their stores are ever gathering;
And from the rose's branches, all day
 long,
Pours the melodious nightingale her
 song;
Amidst the leaves her bark-like nest
 is tost,
In melody, and love, and beauty lost.

The rich narcissus, quaffing dewy wine,
Clings to thy breast, where buds unnumbered twine;
No eye can see the bound where end thy bowers,
No tongue can number half thy gem-like flowers.

Such freshness lingers in thy air of balm,
That even the tulip's burning heart confesses
The life its sigh bestows at ev'ning's calm,
When the glad cypress shakes her graceful tresses.

The waves of each rejoicing river
Murmur melody for ever,
And to the sound, in wild amaze,
On their glad crests the dancing bubble plays.
While lotus flowers, just opened, there
Look with bright eyes towards heaven in prayer.

So clear thy waters that, reflected bright
The dusky Ethiop's skin is pearly white.

So cool, that as the sun his fingers laves,
They shiver on the surface of thy waves.
The immortal lily, pure as angels' plumes,
All day, all night, the grove with light illumes;
The grove, where garlands, by the roses made,
Like clustering Pleiads, glimmer through the shade,
And hide amidst their leaves the timid dove,
Whose ringéd neck proclaims the slave of love.

Tell me what land can boast such treasures?
Is ought so fair, is ought so dear?
Hail! Paradise of endless pleasures!
Hail! beautiful, beloved Kashmeer!

MOASI, KING OF POETS.

Moasi rose from a low station, by the brilliancy of his genius, to become the favoured minstrel of a great king, and to have riches and honours showered npon him. His fame spread far and wide in the east, and he has been by some pronounced as inferior to no poet of his time. It was at the court of Melek Shah, of Ispahan, about the middle of the eleventh century, A.D., that he became celebrated, and received the designation of King of Poets and the dignity of an Emir. Khakani made him his model in versification; and so renowned were his odes, that more than a hundred poets endeavoured to imitate his style.

Moasi was sent by his patron on a mission to Constantinople, and is said to have returned from thence laden with presents of rich stuffs and a train of camels: he seem to have been more fortunate than most of his fellow-bards in keeping the favour of

the prince who befriended him, for there are no vicissitudes recorded in his life.

The Sultan was one evening on the terrace of his palace looking for the new moon, together with many of his nobles; the royal eyes were the first to perceive the appearance of the luminary, when he immediately commanded his poet to extemporise something on the occasion. Moasi, without hesitation, thus exclaimed:—

Thou moon, that gild'st the azure
sphere,
Art thou the fair one's lovely brow?
Or the rich jewel in her ear,
Or the gold hoop of heaven art thou?
Or art thou placed all earth to awe—
An arch of triumph for the Shah?

He was attached to the mysticism of the Sufis, like almost all the great poets, and his poems generally breathe the same spirit which animates them.

MYSTICAL ODE.

What are both worlds but the sign
That presents Almighty Love?
What are beauty's rays divine,
But the beams that round Him move?

Since the floods flow from the sea,
  Let the river swell with pride;
Scarce a river can it be,
  'Tis itself the ocean tide.

When the small seed springs from
    earth,
Leaves, and bark, and fruit have birth;
But the tree so stately grown,
Was and is a grain alone.

Place thyself, oh, lovely fair!
Where a thousand mirrors are;
Though a thousand faces shine,
'Tis but one—and that is thine.

Then the painter's skill allow.
Who could frame so fair a brow.
What are lustrous eyes of flame,
What are cheeks the rose that shame,
What are glances wild and free,
Speech, and shape, and voice—but He?

MYSTICAL ODE.

Oh, behold the fair!—again
  Gaze upon them as they glide,
For their glances can explain
  Secrets hid from all beside.
Beauty first was sent to earth
But to give devotion birth;
And Moasi gazes on
Till his sense and rest are gone.
He is sunk and given up
To those eyes, and to the cup.

Since that radiant form passed by,
Writhed, like twisted locks, I lie;[25]
And, like wheels that waters turn,
Now I groan, and sigh, and burn.
I am lost—so frail and weak!
Vainly for myself I seek.

In the east I saw a star,
Which allured me from afar;
And I gave my life to gaze,
Though I perish in its blaze.

Beauty! source of joy and pain;
  Beauty! that no words can speak;
Mejnoun's eyes must fixed remain
  On the rose of Leila's cheek.
And in Love's great empire where
Is a face so heavenly fair?
When I look on thee no more,
Eden tempts me with its store;
And the Tuba(26) vainly throws
O'er the scene her perfumed boughs.
I a Paradise can own
When I gaze on Thee alone.

Lo! I die, and carry hence
Nought of profit nor offence;
After life's brief toil is past,
I am base and poor at last.
When both worlds I thus resign,
Why should hell or heaven be mine?
Who shall read his future lot?
I am blind, and see it not.
On the board Moasi traced
But two lines—how soon effaced!
They his destiny may show,
But their meaning who shall know?

KHAKANI. (27)

Khakani delighted in solitude like his fellow pupil Feleki, but having absented himself from court without permission in order to enjoy it, he was pursued by order of Manucheher, and confined for seven months in the fortress of Schabran, where he had frequent conversations with certain captive Christians, and wrote a poem in praise of Christianity. Nevertheless, after his release, he made a pilgrimage to Mecca, and wrote a *kassideh* on the journey, in which he describes the perils of the desert.

There is an odd story told of him and his patron, who appears to have been a dangerous person to deal with. The poet sent a letter to the prince requesting a present of *a lynx*, OR *a hive of bees:* at which the patron was so much offended, that he should have the boldness to fetter his

generosity with an *or*, that he sent an order for him to be *instantly put to death.*

The terrified bard to screen himself, threw the blame on a fly smeared with honey which, he said, had blotted the point under the word *with (ba)*, and made it *(ya)*, *or*, insisting that he had begged for a lynx *and* a hive of bees also. The ingenious expedient succeeded, and he escaped.

His death took place at Tabriz, A.D. 1186 (A. H. 582). He is considered the most learned of the lyric poets of Persia.

The following is curious, from the repetition at the end of each stanza: the poet seems in love with an unknown beauty:—

GAZEL.

Oh, waving cypress! cheek of rose!
Oh, jasmine-breathing bosom! say,
Tell me each charm that round her glows;
Who are ye that my heart betray;
Tyrant unkind! to whom I bow,
Oh, life-destroyer!—who art thou?

I saw thy form of waving grace!
I heard thy soft and gentle sighs;
I gazed on that enchanting face,
And looked in thy *narcissus* eyes;[28]

Oh! by the hopes thy smiles allow,
Bright soul-inspirer!—who art thou?

Where'er she walks, amidst the shades,
Where perfumed hyacinths unclose,
Danger her ev'ry glance pervades—
Her bow is bent on friends and foes.
Thy rich cheek shames the rose—thy
brow
Is like the young moon—who art thou?

Thy poet-slave has dared to drain
Draughts of thy beauty, till his soul,
Confused and lost in pleasing pain,
Is fled beyond his own control.
What bliss can life accord me now
But once to know thee!—who art thou?

OMAR KHIAM.

Omar was one of the most remarkable, as well as the most distinguished, of the poets of Persia, at the latter end of the twelfth century. He was altogether unprecedented in regard to the freedom of his religious opinions; or, rather, his boldness in denouncing hypocrisy and intolerance, and the enlightened views he took of the fanaticism and mistaken devotion of his countrymen. He may be called the Voltaire of Persia, though his writings are not calculated to shock European notions so much as those of the followers of the Prophet. The priests were his great enemies, and he was peculiarly hated by the false devotees, whose arts he exposed. His indulgence to other creeds gave great offence, and his liberty of speech drew down upon him continued censure; yet was he extremely popular, and his compositions were read with avidity by those who did not come under the head of bigots, and the admiration of this class consoled him for the enmity of the other.

He was born at Nishapour, and devoted much of his time to the study of astronomy, of which science he was a learned professor;

but it is asserted by his ill-wishers, that instead of his studies leading him to the acknowledgment of the power of the Supreme Being, they prompted him to disbelief. The result of his reflections on this important subject is given in a poem of his, much celebrated, under the title of Rubajat Omar Khiam.

He was the friend of Hassan Sabah, the founder of the sect of the Assassins; and, it has been conjectured, assisted him in the establishment of his diabolical doctrines and fellowship. Some allowance must, however, be made, for the prejudices of his historians, who would, of course, neglect nothing calculated to cast odium on one so inimical to their superstitions.

Omar Khiam seems particularly to direct his satire against the mysticism of Moasi, and the rest of the Mystic Poets.

The following will give an idea of his compositions:—

PROFESSION OF FAITH.

Ye who seek for pious fame,
And that light should gild your name,
Be this duty ne'er forgot,—
Love your neighbour—harm him not.

To Thee, Great Spirit, I appeal,
Who can'st the gates of truth unseal;
I follow none, nor ask the way
Of men who go, like me astray;
They perish, but Thou can'st not die,
But liv'st to all eternity.
Such is vain man's uncertain state,
A little makes him base or great;
One hand shall hold the Koran's scroll,
The other raise the sparkling bowl—
One saves, and one condemns the soul.

The temple I frequent is high,
A turkis-vaulted dome—the sky,
That spans the worlds with majesty.
Not quite a Moslem is my creed,
Nor quite a Giaour; my faith, indeed,
May startle some who hear me say,
I'd give my pilgrim staff away,
And sell my turban, for an hour
Of music in a fair one's bower.
I'd sell the rosary for wine,
Though holy names around it twine.
And prayers the pious make so long,
Are turned by me to joyous song;

Or, if a prayer I should repeat,
It is at my beloved's feet.

They blame me that my words are
clear;
Because I am what I appear;
Nor do my acts my words belie—
At least, I shun hypocrisy.
It happened that but yesterday
I marked a potter beating clay,
The earth spoke out—"Why dost
thou strike?
Both thou and I are born alike;
Though some may sink and some
may soar,
We all are earth, and nothing more."

His verses in praise of beauty and wine are much esteemed:—

GAZEL.

Nature made me love the rose,
And my hand was formed alone
Thus the wine cup to enclose;
Blame then—ye, the goblet's foes,—
Nature's fault, and not my own.

When a Houri form appears,
Which a vase of ruby bears,
Call me Giaour if then I prize
All the joys of Paradise!

IN PRAISE OF WINE.

Morn's first rays are glimmering
From the skies the stars are creepiug;
Rouse, for shame, the goblet bring,
All too long thou liest sleeping:
Open those narcissus eyes,
Wake—be happy—and be wise?

Why, ungrateful mau, repine,
When this cup is bright with wine?
All my life I've sought in vain,
Knowledge and content to gain;
All that nature could unfold,
Have I in her page unrolled;
All of glorious and grand
I have sought to understand.
'Twas in youth my early thought,
Riper years no wisdom brought,
Life is ebbing, sure though slow,
Aud I feel I nothing know.

Bring the bowl! at least in this,
Dwells no shadowed distant bliss;
See; I clasp the cup whose power
Yields more wisdom in an hour
Than whole years of study give,
Vainly seeking how to live.
Wine dispenses into air,
Selfish thoughts, and selfish care.
Dost thou know why wine I prize?
He who drinks all ill defies:
And can awhile throw off the thrall
Of self, the God we worship—all!

THE VANITY OF REGRET.

Nothing in this world of ours
  Flows as we would have it flow;
What avail, then, careful hours,
  Thought and trouble, tears and woe?
Through the shrouded veil of earth,
  Life's rich colours gleaming bright,
Though in truth of little worth,
  Yet allure with meteor light.
Life is torture and suspense;
Thought is sorrow—drive it hence!
With no will of mine I came,
With no will depart the same.

THE CUP.

Know'st thou whence the hues are
drawn
Which the tulip's leaves adorn?
'Tis that blood has soaked the earth,
Where her beauties had their birth.

Know'st thou why the violet's eyes
Gleam with dewy purple dyes?
'Tis that tears, for love untrue,
Bathed the banks where first she grew.

If no roses bloom for me,
Thorns my only flowers must be:
If no sun shine on my way,
Torches must provide my day,
Let me drink, as drink the wise:
Pardon for our weakness lies
In the cup—for Heaven well knew,
When I first to being sprung,
I should love the rosy dew,
And its praise would oft be sung.
'Twere impiety to say
We would cast the cup away,
And be votaries no more,
Since it was ordained before.

The latter part of the poem seems intended to ridicule the belief in predestination, carried to so absurd an extent by Mahommedans in general. Reland cites these lines on the subject:—

That which is written must arrive;
'Tis vain to murmur or to strive:
Give up all thoughts to God, for he
Has fixed thy doom by his decree:
All good, all ill, depends on fate,—
The slaves of God must bear—and wait.

This belief in predestination extends to every created thing, not being confined to man alone. Sadee relates, in his "Gulistan," a story of a fisherman, who had caught a fish which his strength did not allow him to drag to shore: fearing to be drawn into the river himself, he abandoned his line, and the fish swam away with the bait in his mouth. His companions mocked him, and he replied:—"What could I do? This animal escaped because his last hour, fixed by fate, was not yet come. Fate governs all, and the fisherman cannot overcome it more than another, nor can he catch fish, if fate is against him, even in the Tigris. The fish itself, *even though dry*, would not die, if

it was the will of fate to preserve its life." The poet adds—"Oh man! why shouldst thou fear? If thy hour is not come, in vain would thy enemy rush against thee with his lance in rest: his arms and his feet would be tied by fate, and the arrow would be turned away, though in the hands of the most expert archer."

A father is made thus to speak to his son:—"Honours and riches are not the fruits of our efforts, therefore give thyself no useless trouble; they cannot be obtained by force, and all efforts are of no more service than collyrium on the eyes of the blind. Thou mayst be a prodigy of genius, but all thy acquirements are of no avail, if *fate is against thee.*"

A poet's version of the same idea runs thus:—

Reproach me not, and vainly say—
"Why idly thus, from day to day,
Let every good pass by thy door,
Nor swell by industry thy store!"
I answer,—labour, toil, and pain,
Prudence, wit, foresight,—all is vain.
Travels are useless: some succeed,
But others but to failure lead.

Fates rules—the miser counts his
heaps,
And Fortune crowns him whilst he
sleeps!

The poem which follows, by Omar Chiam, is in a strain of philosophy of a higher order.

THE WISDOM OF THE SUPREME.

All we see—above, around—
Is but built on fairy ground:
All we trust is empty shade
To deceive our reason made.
Tell me not of Paradise,
Or the beams of houris' eyes;
Who the truth of tales can tell,
Cunning priests invent so well?
He who leaves this mortal shore,
Quits it to return no more.

In vast life's unbounded tide
They alone content may gain,
Who can good from ill divide,
Or in ignorance abide—
All between is restless pain.

Before thy prescience, power divine
What is this idle sense of mine?
What all the learning of the schools?
What sages, priests, and pedants?—
Fools!

The world is thine, from thee it rose,
By thee it ebbs, by thee it flows.
Hence, worldly lore! By whom is wisdom shown?
The Eternal knows,[29] knows all, and *He* alone!

FLOWERS & BIRDS.

BY AZZ' EDDIN ELMOCADESSI. (30)

Learn from birds and flowers, oh man!
Virtues that may gild thy name;
And their faults, if thou would'st scan,
Know thy failings are the same;
The fair narcissus, humble still,
Reflecting on her lowly birth,
And feeling Nature, prone to ill,
Inclines her soft eyes to the earth.

The water-lily, pale with care,
  Mourns as the waters pass her by;
"Alas!" she sighs, "what woes I bear!
  And must submit to misery:
But time can never teach my heart
From love's delusive joy to part!"

The willow is the only tree
  Whose slender boughs forever wave;
Devotion in their homage see
  To Him who leaves and blossoms
    gave:
And love that gentle willow knows,
Bending its glances towards the rose.

The modest jasmine is content,
She whispers, "Lovers, why lament!"

The bright anemone to view
Is bright and fair in shape and hue;
But in her leaves no perfume dwells,
  And in her heart is wickedness:
With secret scorn her bosom swells;
  Her crimes upon her mem'ry press:
"Behold," she muses, "beauty glows,
  All radiant in each outward part;
But, ah! my soul too sadly knows
  That vice is burning in my heart!

* * * * *

Thou see'st the nightingale in spring—
He seems as joy were all his own—
From tree to tree, with rapid wing,
He flits, with love in ev'ry tone;
So volatile, so debonaire,
As though he never knew a care.
But ah! how much art thou deceived!
His heart is filled with pensive pain,
For earth's frail lot his soul is grieved;
He sees her glory's fleeting train,
And how each beauty withers fast,
Nor leaves a shadow where it passed.
He knows that ruin soon will seize
The sweetest flowers, the fairest trees;
He knows the garden will decay,
And marks it fading day by day.
Thus, if aright thou read his song,
It tells of grief the whole year long!

Know'st thou why round his neck the dove
A collar wears?—it is to tell
He is the faithful slave of love,
And serves all those who serve him well.

The swallow leaves his lowly nest
  And hies him to a foreign shore:
He loves with courtly man to rest,
  From whom he learns a higher lore
Than if he kept amongst his kind,
Nor sought with care to store his mind.
And men the welcome swallow prize,
  For he a kindly guest is known;
No base or selfish end he tries,
  But friendly converse seeks alone.

The owl has learnt the world's deceit,
  Its vanity and struggles vain;
And deems it flattery unmeet,
  A thought from reason to obtain.
Apart from the perfidious throng,
  In wisdom's contemplative mood,
To Heaven she gives her whole life long,
  And steals to holy solitude.

The peacock, wedded to the world,
  Of all her gorgeous plumage vain,
With glowing banners wide unfurled,
  Sweeps slowly by in proud disdain;
But in her heart a torment lies,
That dims the lustre of those dyes;
She turns away her glance—but no,
Her hideous feet appear below!

And fatal echoes, deep and loud,
Her secret mind's dark caverns stir;
She knows, though beautiful and proud,
That Paradise is not for her.
For, when in Eden's blissful spot
Lost Eblis tempted man, she dared
To join the treach'rous angel's plot,
And thus his crime and sentence shared.
Her frightful claws remind her well,
Of how she sinned and how she fell;
And when they meet her startled eyes,
Her fearful shrieks appal the skies!

The parrot talks and does his best
To make life pass, with cheerful mien,
In hopes that in the regions blest
Man will befriend and take him in.

The bat retires to some lone cell,
Where worldly noise can ne'er intrude;
Where he in shade may calmly dwell,
And spend the day in solitude.
Modest and peaceful, well he knows
How frail is man, how false his ways;
And turns him from day's empty shows,
And from the sun's intemperate blaze.

He is enamoured of the night,
And while no rival comes between,
The stars can yield him ample light,
When he may watch and gaze unseen;
Then he retires to muse once more,
On all her beauty's wondrous store;
And feels fair night has charms for him,
To which day's garish rays are dim.

The bee draws forth from fruit and flower
Sweet dews, that swell his golden dower;
But never injures by his kiss,
Those who have made him rich in bliss.

The moth, though tortured by the flame,
Still hovers round and loves the same:
Nor is his fond attachment less—
"Alas!" he whispers, "can it be,
Spite of my ceaseless tenderness,
That I am doomed to death by thee?"



NIZAMI

NIZAMI, the first of the "romantic poets," flourished in the sixth year of the Hejira, and was surnamed Canjehur, from his native city in the province of Orran, near Berdaa.

His principal works are called the *Five Treasures*: they are, 'The Loves of Khosrû and Shireen;' 'The Loves of Mejnoun and Leila;' 'The Sikander Namah' (Life of Alexander); 'The Seven Beauties;' and a moral poem called 'The Magazine of Mysteries.'

Nizami has succeeded beyond all other poets on the subject of Shi-

reen, although he did not neglect any of the popular traditions of Persia. This is acknowledged as his *chef d'œuvre.*

THE STORY OF KHOSRU PARVIZ.

Khosrû Parviz lived A.D. 590: he was a prince of exalted virtues and great magnificence: he fought against the Greek emperors with success, but was at last defeated by Heraclius. He is said to have married a daughter of the Emperor Maurice, named Irene, called by the Persians Shireen, or Sweet.

Ferhâd's history forms a tragical episode in this romance. He was a statuary, celebrated throughout the East for his great genius, but was daring enough to fix his affections on the beloved of a king. The jealousy of Khosrû was excited, and he lamented to his courtiers the existence of a passion which was so violent as not to be concealed, and which gave him great uneasiness. He was recommended to employ Ferhâd in such a manner as to occupy his whole life, and divert him from his dangerous dream: accordingly, as on one occasion the fair Shireen had, somewhat unreasonably, required of her royal lover a *river of milk*, he made her desire a pretext for the labours he imposed on his presumptuous rival.

Ferhâd was summoned to the presence of Khosrû, and commissioned by the king to

execute a work which should render his name immortal, but one which, to accomplish, demanded almost superhuman powers: this was to clear away all impediments which obstructed the passage of the great mountain of Beysitoun, at that time impassable in consequence of its mighty masses of rock and stone. He commanded him, after having done this, to cause the rivers on the opposite side of the mountain to join.

Ferhad, nothing daunted, replied that he would remove the very heart of the rock from the king's path; but on condition that the lovely Shireen should be the reward of his labours. Khosrû, secretly triumphing in the conviction that what the artist undertook was impossible, consented to his terms, and the indefatigable lover began his work.

THE LABOURS OF FERHAD.

On lofty Beysitoun the lingering sun
Looks down on ceaseless labours, long begun:
The mountain trembles to the echoing sound
Of falling rocks, that from her sides rebound.

Each day all respite, all repose denied—
No truce, no pause, the thundering
strokes are plied;
The mist of night around her summit
coils,
But still Ferhâd, the lover-artist, toils,
And still—the flashes of his axe
between—
He sighs to ev'ry wind, "Alas! Shi-
reen!(31)
Alas! Shireen!—my task is well nigh
done,
The goal in view for which I strive alone.
Love grants me powers that Nature
might deny;
And, whatsoe'er my doom, the world
shall tell,
Thy lover gave to immortality
Her name he loved—so fatally—so
well!

The enamoured sculptor prophesied a-right; for the wonderful efforts made by this "slave of love" left imperishable monuments of his devotion, in the *carved caverns* which, to this day, excite the amazement and admira-

tion of the traveller who visits the Kesr-e-Shireen, or "Villa of Shireen," and follows the stream called Joui-shur, or "stream of milk," which flows from the mountain, between Hamadân and Hulwân.

Ferhâd first constructed a recess or chamber in the rock, wherein he carved the figure of Shireen, near the front of the opening: she was represented surrounded by attendants and guards; while in the centre of the cave was an equestrian statue of Khosrû, clothed in armour, the workmanship so exquisite that the nails and buttons of the coat of mail were clearly to be seen, and are said to be so still.(32) An eye-witness says—"Whoso looks on the stone would imagine it to be animated." The chamber and the statues remain still there. As Ferhâd continued to hew away pieces of the rock, which *are like as many columns*, the task was soon performed. The vestiges of the chisel remain, so that the sculptures appear recent. The horse of Khosrû was exquisitely carved: it was called Shebdiz.

THE GREAT WORK.

A hundred[33] arms were weak one
block to move
Of thousands, moulded by the hand of
Love
Into fantastic shapes and forms of
grace,
Which crowd each nook of that ma-
jestic place.

The piles give way, the rocky peaks
divide,
The stream comes gushing on—a foam-
ing tide!
A mighty work, for ages to remain,
The token of his passion and his pain.

As flows the milky flood from Allah's
throne,[34]
Rushes the torrent from the yielding
stone;
And sculptured there, amazed, stern
Khosrû stands,
And sees, with frowns, obeyed his
harsh commands:
While she, the fair beloved, with being
rife,
Awakes the glowing marble into life.

Ah! hapless youth; ah! toil repaid by
woe,—
A king thy rival and the world thy
foe!
Will *she* wealth, splendour, pomp for
thee resign?
And only genius, truth, and passion
thine!

Around the pair, lo! groups of courtiers
wait,
And slaves and pages crowd in solemn
state;
From columns imaged wreaths their
garlands throw,
And fretted roofs with stars appear to
glow;
Fresh leaves and blossoms seem around
to spring,
And feathered throngs their loves are
murmuring;
The hands of Peris might have wrought
those stems,
Where dewdrops hang their fragile
diadems;

And strings of pearl and sharp-cut
diamonds shine,
New from the wave, or recent from the
mine.

"Alas! Shireen!" at every stroke he
cries;
At every stroke fresh miracles arise:
"For thee these glories and these
wonders all,
For thee I triumph, or for thee I fall;
For thee my life one ceaseless toil has
been,
Inspire my soul anew—Alas! Shireen!"

The task of the rival of Khosrû was at length completed, and the king heard with dismay of his success: all the courtiers were terrified at the result of their advice, and saw that some further stratagem was necessary. They therefore engaged an old woman who had been known to Ferhâd, and in whom he had confidence, to report to him tidings which would at once destroy his hopes.

THE MESSENGER.

What raven note disturbs his musing
mood:
What form comes stealing on his
solitude?
Ungentle messenger, whose word of ill,
All the warm feelings of his soul can
chill!

"Cease, idle youth, to waste thy days,"
she said,
"By empty hopes a visionary made;
Why in vain toil thy fleeting life consume
To frame a palace?—rather hew a tomb.
Even like sere leaves that autumn winds
have shed,
Perish thy labours, for—Shireen is dead!"

He heard the fatal news—no word, no
groan;
He spoke not, moved not,—stood trans-
fixed to stone.
Then, with a frenzied start, he raised on
high
His arms, and wildly tossed them
towards the sky;
Far in the wide expanse, his axe he flung,
And from the precipice at once he sprung.
The rocks, the sculptured caves, the
valleys green,
Sent back his dying cry—"Alas! Shi-
reen!"(35)

The legend goes on to relate that the handle of the axe flung away by Ferhâd, being of pomegranate wood, took root on the spot where it fell, and became a flourishing tree: it possessed healing powers, and was much resorted to by believers long afterwards.

Khosrû, on learning this catastrophe, did not conceal his satisfaction, but liberally rewarded the old woman who had caused so fatal a termination to the career of his rival; but the gentle-hearted Shireen heard of his fate with grief, and shed amny tears on his tounb.

The charms of Shireen were destined to create mischief, for the king had a son by a former marriage, who became enamoured of his fatally beautiful mother-in-law. His father, Khosrû, was, in the end, murdered by his hand, and Shireeu became the object of his importunities. Wearied, at length, with constant struggles, she feigned to give him a favourable answer, and promised, if he would permit her to visit the grave of her husband, *when she returned* she would be his. Shireen accordingly weut on her melancholy errand, and true to her affection for her beloved Khosrû, stabbed herself, and died upon his tomb.

SADI

THE great poet Sadi is esteemed amongst the Persians as a master in poetry and in morality. He is better known in Europe than any other Eastern author except Hafiz, and has been more frequently translated. Jami calls him "The Nightingale of the Groves of Shirâz," of which city (which can boast of being the birth-place of some of the most celebrated men of Persia) he was a native.

Sadi was born about 1194, and his life extended, it is said,

over a period of one hundred and two years, great part of which time he spent in travel and the acquisition of knowledge, and a considerable portion in retirement and devotion. He is called "the most poignant of the eloquent," and his works are termed "the salt mine of poets," being revered as unrivalled models of the first genius in the world.

His descent was good, though his family was decayed in point of wealth, and some of its members were engaged in commercial pursuits: though he was twice married during his long career, like our own great poet Milton, his opinion of women is by no means flattering, as, for instance, when he says:—

"Take your wife's opinion, and act in opposition to it."

On another occasion he most ungallantly observes:—

"Choose a fresh wife every spring, or new year's day; for the almanack of last year is good for nothing."

His philosophy enabled him to support all the ills of life with patience and fortitude, and one of his remarks, arising from the destitute condition in which he once found himself, is deserving preservation:—

"I never complained of my condition but

once, *when my feet were bare, and I had not money to buy shoes:* but I met a man *without feet*, and became contented with my lot."

When a boy he confesses to have been religious overmuch; and mentions a judicious reproof of his father, on his ridiculing some friends who fell asleep while the Koran was being read:—"You had better," said he, "have been asleep yourself than occupied in discovering faults in your neighbours."

Sadi made the holy pilgrimage no less than fourteen times; and so great was his reputation for sanctity, that his admirers look upon him as a saint, and attribute to him the power of working miracles. He led the life for some time of a *sacayi*, or water-drawer, in the Holy Land: and was accustomed to administer to the wants of the thirsty traveller, till at length he was found worthy of an introduction to the prophet Khizr(56)—a mysterious personage, the subject of endless allusion in Eastern works—who moistened his mouth with the waters of immortality. To doubt this legend was considered sacrilegious. Several other poets, it seems, applied for a draught to this keeper of "the sacred well," but without success. Hafiz, however, boasts, and his followers believe, that he obtained some of its inspiring waters.

The works of Sadi are very numerous, and all popular and familiar in every mouth in the East. His two greatest works are the "Bostān" and "Gulistān,"(37) which abound in striking beauties, and show great purity of feeling and knowledge of human nature.

CONTENTMENT.

FROM THE BOSTAN.

Smile not, nor think the legend vain,
That in old times a worthless stone,
Such power in holy hands could gain,
That straight a silver heap it shone.
Thy alchemist Contentment be,
Equal is stone or ore to thee.

The infant's pure unruffled breast,
No avarice nor pride molest:
He fills his little hands with earth,
Nor knows that silver has more worth.

The sultan sits in pomp and state,
And sees the dervish at his gate;
But yet of wealth the sage has more
Than the great king, with all his store.

Rich is a beggar, worn and spent,
To whom a silver coin is thrown;
But Feridoun(38) was not content,
Though Ajum's kingdom was his own!

Most of the prose works of Sadi are mixed with verse, a custom very general with Oriental writers. In every department of poetry he excelled, and all he touched was rendered valuable: the favourite romances of Persia were not left unnoticed by him, but these subjects are generally thought to have been more successfully treated by Nizami, Hatifi, and Jami.

A variety of romantic anecdotes are told of Sadi in his travels: the following is singularly wild and poetical:—

"Sadi,(39) when in Armenia, became much attached to a young man of his own age. In that country people died not the natural death, but on a particular day, once a-year, they were in the habit of meeting on a plain near their principal cities, when they occupied themselves in recreation and amusement, in the midst of which individuals of every age and rank would suddenly stop, make a reverence to the west, gird up their loins, and setting out full speed towards that quarter of the desert, were no more seen or heard of.

"Sadi had often remarked that the relations of those persons made few observations or explanations on their disappearance. At last, on such an anniversary, Sadi observed that his friend was preparing to set off, when he seized upon his girdle, and insisted upon knowing what it meant. The youth solemnly enjoined him to let him go, for that the Malic-al-mo-at, or angel of death, had already called on him twice, and on the third call he must obey his destiny, whether he would or no; but Sadi kept his hold, and found himself carried along with such velocity as derived him of the power of knowing whither they went. At last they stopped in a verdant plain in the midst of the desert, when the youth stretched himself upon the earth: the turf opened, and he was swallowed up.

Sadi threw dust over the spot, lamented him in beautiful verse, and set about finding the way back: he had to cross rivers of molten gold, silver, and copper, through deserts and wildernesses, and over mountains of snow, before he found himself once more at the place from whence he had started."(40)

ON TRUE WORTH.

Although a gem be cast away,
And lie obscured in heaps of clay,
Its precious worth is still the same;
Although vile dust be whirled to Heaven,
To such no dignity is given,
Still base as when from earth it came.

I saw the demon in a dream,
But how unlike he seemed to be,
To all of horrible we deem,
And all of fearful that we see.
His shape was like a cypress bough,
His eyes like those that Houris wear,
His face as beautiful as though
The rays of Paradise were there.
I near him came, and spoke—"Art thou,"
I said, "indeed the Evil One?
No angel has so bright a brow,
Such yet no eye has looked upon.

Why should mankind make *thee* a jest,
When thou canst show a face like this?
Fair as the moon in splendour drest,
An eye of joy, a smile of bliss!
The painter draws thee vile to sight,
Our baths thy frightful form display;
They told me thou wert black as night,
Behold! thou art as fair as day!"
The lovely vision's ire awoke,
His voice was loud, and proud his mien,
"Believe not, friend," 'twas thus he spoke,
"That thou my likeness yet hast seen:
The pencil that my portrait made
Was guided by an envious foe;
In Paradise I man betrayed,
And he, from hatred, paints me so."

ATTAR.

Ferid-ed-deen Attar, of Nizapoor, was called the "scourge of spiritual men;" he was one of the great Sufi masters, and his life was spent in devotion and contemplation. He lived in the reign of Sanjah, in A.D. 1119, and, in common with several other famous poets, died at a very advanced age, namely, that of 114 years. It would seem that poetry in the East was favourable to human life, by so many of its professors attaining to such an age, particularly those who professed the Sufi doctrine.

His great work is the "Perid Namah," a moral poem, containing useful maxims, of which the following are specimens:—

THE WAY TO PARADISE.

Wouldst thou inherit Paradise,
These maxims keep before thine eyes;
So thy heart's mirror shall appear,
For ever shining bright and clear.
Give thanks when fortune smiles serene,
Be patient when her frown is seen;
If thou hast sinned, for pardon plead,
And help shall follow at thy need.

But shall he hope the prize to hold,
Who with new sins conceals the old?
Be penitent, be watchful still,
And fly the votaries of ill;
Avoid the paths that lead to vice,
And win thy way to Paradise.

THE PRAISE OF THE ALMIGHTY.

Unbounded praise to God be given,
Who from his throne, the height of
heaven,
Looked on this handful of frail earth—
Unnoticed man[41]—and gave him birth.

On Adam breathed, and bade the wave
Pause, and his servant, Noah, save;
The tempest, with His terrors clad,
And swept from earth the tribe of Ad.[42]

And for His "friend," [43] Oh! blissful
name!
To roses changed a bed of flame:
The smallest insect, at His will,
Becomes an instrument of ill.[44]

He spoke, the sea o'erwhelms His foes,
And the hard rock a camel grows![45]
The iron turns, at His command,
To pliant wax, in David's hand.[46]

To Solomon he gave His sway,
And bade the Dives his sign obey;[47]
To one a diadem is given,
Another's head the *saw* has riven.[48]

Impartial in His goodness still,
Equal to all is good or ill.

One lies on Persian silk reclined,
One naked in a frozen wind;
One scarce can count his heaps of ore,
One faints with hunger at the door.

He bade a virgin's child appear,[49]
And made an infant's witness clear.[50]

The dives before His vengeance fly,
By hosts of stars expelled the sky.[51]
And kings, who hold the world in thrall,
At His great word to ruin fall.

THE MOOLAH OF RÛM.

JELAL-ED-DIN RÛMI, usually called *The Moolah*, was born at Balkh, a city of Khorassan. His father, Boha-ed-din Veled, enjoyed distinguished honours there, under the domination of Shah Mohammed Kharizm. He was an enthusiastic follower of the doctrine of the Sufis, and became so celebrated as a preacher and expounder that people flocked from all parts of Persia to hear him discourse. He died in the year of the Hejira 631 (A.D. 1233).

His son succeeded him as head of the sect, but surpassed his father, not only in the peculiar virtues and attainments of the Sufis, but by his splendid poetical genius. Retired from the world, wholly absorbed in meditation, and in a total forgetfulness[52] of his material existence, he never appeared to men except to reveal the august secrets of his mysterious doctrine, and living the most

perfect model of a Sufi, this "precious pearl of the ocean of mysticism quitted this fragile world" in A.D. 1272, at the age of sixty-nine years.

His famous poems are collected into a book called "Kullyat-al Mesnevy;" they are generally regarded as the most perfect models of the mystic style; but its obscurity is a great obstacle to the thorough comprehension of the compositions. "There is," says Sir William Jones, "a depth and solemnity in his works unequalled by any poet of this class; even Hafiz must be considered inferior to him."

A Persian critic was asked how it happened that the two most celebrated Persian Sufi poets should differ so much in their description of love.

Hafiz observes:—"Love, at first sight, appeared easy, but afterwards full of difficulties."

The Moolah, in direct opposition, says:—"Love at first resembles a murderer, that he may alarm all who are without his pale."

"Poor Hafiz," says the critic, "did not find out till the last what the wiser Moolah saw at a glance."

The following is a specimen of his lighter poetry:—

THE FAIREST LAND.

"Tell me, gentle traveller, thou
Who hast wandered far and wide,
Seen the sweetest roses blow,
And the brightest rivers glide;
Say, of all thine eyes have seen,
Which the fairest land has been?"

"Lady, shall I tell thee where,
Nature seems most blest and fair,
Far above all climes beside?—
'Tis where those we love abide:
And that little spot is best,
Which the loved one's foot hath pressed.

"Though it be a fairy space,
Wide and spreading is the place;
Though 'twere but a barren mound,
'Twould become enchanted ground.

"With thee yon sandy waste would seem,
The margin of Al Cawthar's stream;
And thou canst make a dungeon's gloom
A bower where new-born roses bloom."

HAFIZ

Amongst all the poets of Persia, he whose *name*, if not his works, is most familiar to the English reader is Mohammed Schems-ed-din Hafiz, the prince of Persian lyric poets, of whom Shirâz may boast, that to that charming city a greater

charm was added in his birth, at the beginning of the fourteenth century of the Christian era. His surname of Hafiz indicates that he was master of the whole koran, the word expressing *keeper*, or *possessor*. Leading a life of poverty, of which he was proud, for he considered poverty the companion of genius,—he constantly refused the invitations of monarchs to visit their courts; and only once yielded to these frequent solicitations in the instance of the Prince of Yezd, whose want of generosity confirmed him in his resolution never again to leave his native place, where he remained till his death, in the year of the Hejira 791 (A.D. 1389).

The endless variety of the poems of Hafiz, their brilliancy, energy, and originality, are so striking, that, as Sir W. Jones justly remarks, it is difficult to select specimens; so replete with surpassing beauty, thought, feeling, and expression, are they. To open his book at hazard, and fix on the first lines that occur, is a safe plan; as it is impossible to choose amiss in that garden of ever-blooming roses.

The grace, ease, and fancy of his numbers are inimitable, like those of our own poet Moore; and there is a magic in his lays which few, even of his professed enemies, have been able to resist. To the young, the gay, and the enthusiastic, his verses are

ever welcome, and the sage discovers in them a hidden mystery, which reconciles him to their subjects.

There is a curious story told of the dispute which occurred at the time of his death, between those who condemned and those who admired the poet. The former objected to his being buried in consecrated ground; the latter insisted that he had never offended against religion or morals, and deserved every honour that could be bestowed. It was at length agreed that a line of his own should decide, and the book being opened at the following passage, all opposition was overcome at once:—

"Withdraw not your steps from the obsequies of Hafiz; though immersed in sin he will rise into Paradise."

His tomb, near Shirâz, has been, from that day, visited as a sacred spot by pilgrims of all ages: the place of his birth is held in veneration, and there is not a Persian whose heart does not echo his strains; and is there a poet's in England which does not respond to the exquisite translation, by Sir William Jones, of those beautiful mysterious verses, beginning—"Sweet maid, if thou wouldst charm my sight."

Hafiz has been called the Persian Anacreon: in this character he composed the

following Kasidah and Gazels,(53) to which Sir William Jones alone could do justice:—

THE FEAST OF SPRING.

My breast is filled with roses,
My cup is crowned with wine;
And by my side reposes
The maid I hail as mine.
The monarch, whereso'er he be,
Is but a slave compared to me!

There glare no torches throwing,
Shall in our bower be found;
Her eyes, like moon-beams glowing,
Cast light enough around:
And well all odours I can spare,
Who scent the perfume of her hair.

The honey-dew thy charm might borrow,
Thy lip alone to me is sweet;
When thou art absent, faint with sorrow,
I hide me in some lone retreat.
Why talk to me of power or fame,
What are those idle toys to me?
Why ask the praises of my name;
My joy, my triumph is in thee!

How blest am I! around me, swelling,
The notes of melody arise;
I hold the cup, with juice excelling,
And gaze upon thy radiant eyes.
Oh, Hafiz!—never waste thy hours
Without the cup, the lute, and love!
For 'tis the sweetest time of flowers,
And none these moments shall reprove.
The nightingales around thee sing,
It is the joyous feast of spring.

THE SEASON OF THE ROSE.

String the lyre!—has Fortune ever
Given to men of worth their due?
Then, since vain is all endeavour,
And we scorn her malice too,
Why should we refuse to share
All the joys these hours prepare?
Now the air is filled with mirth;
Now the roses spring from earth;
Now they bloom, but now alone,—
Fear not, though the wise reprove;
Ere their soft perfume be gone,
Raise the soul to verse and love.

Oh, Hafiz!—it were shame to say,
—In nightingales like us 'twere treason;—
That we, who make the magic lay,
Sang not in the rose's season.

THE OMEN.

This morning I resolved, at last,
All idle thoughts far hence to cast,
And in repentance steep my soul,—
Forgot the roses and the bowl!
"Oh, let some omen be my guide,
And I will follow it," I cried:
But say, alas! what could I do?
'Twas Spring, that breaker of all vows;—
I saw the trees their leaves renew,
I saw fresh roses on the boughs:
I saw the merry cup go round,
My rivals with enjoyment crowned!
Whilst I, a looker-on, must see
All gay and full of hope but me!

One draught!—but one!—that drunk,
I fly
At once this dang'rous company.
But, ah! *she* came!—as buds to light,
My heart expanded at her sight,
And every strong resolve gave way—
My rivals saw me blest as they!
I'll seat my love amidst the bower,
With rosy garlands bind her hair;
Wreath round her arms the jasmine
flower,
Than those white chains more sweet
and fair,
Away!—I was not born a sage;
Am I the censor of the age?—
Is mine a priest's or judge's part,
To chide at mirth and love like this?
Elated, like the rose, my heart
Throws off its shrouding veil for bliss.
Why should I censure wine? fill full
To her, the kind, the beautiful.
If but one kiss I should obtain,
Youth and delight were mine again;
And I another age should live,
Such power the smiles of beauty give.

Reproach me, then, ye wise, no more,
Nor say I joy in *secret* pleasure;
Let all behold my cup run o'er,
While harp and lute keep joyous
measure.

ON HIS TRAVELS.

The world to me has been a home;
Wherever knowledge could be sought,
Through differing climes I loved to
roam,
And every shade of feeling caught,
From minds, whose varied fruits
supply
The food of my philosophy.
And still the treasures of my store
Have made my wanderings less severe;
From every spot some prize I bore,
From every harvest gleaned an ear.
But find no land can ever vie
With bright Shirâz in purity;
And blest for ever be the spot
Which makes all other climes forgot!

GAZEL ON HIS LOVE.

Sweet breeze! her breath thy murmurs bear,
The perfume of her sigh is thine;
But dare not play amidst her hair,
For every golden curl is mine!
Oh, rose! what radiant hues hast thou,
That in her face less brightly glow!
Her love is joy without regret,
While briars and thorns thy bloom beset.

Oh, opening buds!—her cheeks more fair,
For ever rosy blushing are.
Narcissus!—thou art pale of hue,
Her eyes that languish, sparkle too;
I tell thee, gently waving pine!
More graceful is her form than thine.

Oh, my rapt soul! if thou hadst power
To choose all blessings earth can give,
Is there a better, richer dower,
Than for her tenderness to live!

Come, my sole love! from those dear eyes
Thy Hafiz is too long away;
Come, give his heart the sweet surprise,
Though 'twere but for a single day!

MYSTIC ODE.

In wide Eternity's vast space,
Where no beginning was, wert Thou:
The rays of all-pervading grace
Beneath thy veil flamed on thy brow.
Then Love and Nature sprang to birth,
And Life and Beauty filled the earth.

Awake my Soul! pour forth thy praise,
To that great Being anthems raise—
That wondrous Architect who said,
"Be formed," and this great orb was
made.

Since first I heard the blissful sound—
"To man my spirit's breath is given;"
I knew, with thankfulness profound,
His sons we are—our Home is Heaven.
Oh! give me tidings that shall tell
When I may hope with Thee to dwell,
That I may quit this world of pain,
Nor seek to be its guest again.

A bird of holiness am I,
That from the vain world's net would
fly;

Shed bounteous Lord, one cheering
shower,
From thy pure cloud of guiding power,
Before, even yet, the hour is come,
When my dust rises towards its home.

What are our deeds?—all worthless,
all—
Oh, bring Devotion's wine,
That strength upon my soul may fall,
From drops thou mad'st divine.
The world's possessions fade and flee,
The only good is—loving Thee!

Oh, happy hour! when I shall rise
From earth's delusions to the skies,
Shall find my soul at rest, and greet
The traces of my loved one's feet:
Dancing with joy, whirled on with speed,
Like moats, that gorgeous sunbeams
feed,
Until I reach the fountain bright,
Whence yonder sun derives his light.

The reputation of Hafiz has not suffered from time, and he is still held in as much esteem as Shakspere with us. In an amusing satire on the customs and manners of the

women of Persia, called "Kitabi Kulsûm Naneh," which in its style is not unlike the Sirventes of the Troubadours, are the following passages illustrative of the delight taken in the poet's verses.

"The women of Shirâz have remarkable taste in minstrelsy, and are devoted to the memory of Hafiz.

"Every woman should be instructed in the art of playing on the *dyra*, or tambourine; and she in turn must teach it to her daughters, that their time may be passed in joy and mirth; and the songs of Hafiz, above all others, must be remembered. If it so happen that neither a *dyra nulkadâr* nor a *sikdâr* is in the house, at any rate there should be a *brass dish* and a *mallet* for the purpose of producing music."

The opinion of the learned Reviczki,(54) given by Sir William Jones, that Hafiz was an *esprit fort*, and ridiculed the Koran and the Prophets, is not generally entertained in Persia, and his book is consulted in the same manner as Virgil has often been. Nadir Shah resolved on two famous sieges in consequence of two verses which he found on opening the volume of the poet's verses.

The famous Gazel of Hafiz sung by every Nautch girl throughout India, is "Mutriba Khush,"—

"Mutriba Khush, his sweetest song."

The most familiar lines are "Taza be taza no be no," and the song is a peculiar favourite with the English, being set to one of the few pretty Eastern airs.

The beautiful poem of "Sweet maid, if thou wouldst charm my sight," of Sir William Jones, which begins—

"Egher ân turki Shirázi,"

is considered a model of beautiful composition.

The magic power possessed by Hafiz over his readers is easily accounted for, if the legend of his having quaffed of the mysterious cup of immortality be believed. The story, which is very poetical, runs thus:—

About four leagues from the city of Shirâz is a place called Peri-sebz, or the "Green old Man," and a popular superstition prevailed, that whoever watched there forty nights without sleep would become a great poet. Hafiz, when a youth, resolved to try the adventure: he was at this time in love with a beautiful "fair one," whose name of Shakhi Nebât, expressed a "branch of sugar cane;" but he had a powerful rival in the Prince of Shirâz. Like Ferhâd, the lover of Shireen, he however was not to be daunted

by the rank of him who pretended to the smiles of his charming favourite. Every morning he walked before the house of his coy mistress, anxiously watching for some sign of recognition which might give him hope; at noon he rested, and at night repaired to the place of the "green old man," and there took up his watchful station.

This he continued for thirty-nine nights, and on the fortieth morning was charmed to observe that his mistress beckoned to him from the balcony, and invited him to enter. She received him with enthusiasm, declaring her preference of a bright genius to the son of a king. On the approach of night he hurried away, bent on finishing the adventure. Early on the morning, after his agitated fortieth night, the young poet perceived an aged man approaching. He could not see from whence he came, and could scarcely define his figure, which was wrapt in a green mantle: in his hand he bore a cup containing a crystal liquor, which sparkled and foamed as if it would overleap its narrow bounds. The aged man held out the vase to Hafiz, who, seizing it with avidity, drank an inspiring draught, and found in it the gift of immortal poesy.

JAMI.

THE favourite subject of the Loves of Yussuf and Zuleika, which every Persian poet has touched with more or less success, has never found one who so thoroughly entered into it, and rendered it so beautiful, as Jami. He entirely remodelled the poem of Ferdusi, and gave it so many new graces that his composition completely superseded that of his

master, and his name is always peculiarly associated with those of the lovers whose "well sung woes" he has so eloquently sung.

Jami was born in Khorassan, at the village of Jam, from whence he is named; his proper appellation being Abd' Arahman.

He was a Sufi, and preferred, like many of his fellow poets, the meditations and extasies of mysticism to the pleasures of a court. He became, however, a friend of princes.

One of the great aims of the philosophic and benevolent Jami was to instruct and improve his auditors; and in order to do so effectually, particularly as regarded the common people, he was accustomed to come frequently to the great mosque of Hérât, and there converse familiarly with all whom he met.

His eloquence was great, his manner persuasive, and his doctrine pure; and like St. Aldelm,(55) the friend of King Athelstan, he succeeded in attracting and rivetting the attentiou of his hearers.

Jami died in 1492, mourned by the whole city of Hérât: his funeral expenses were defrayed by Sultan Hossein, and a magnificent train of the most illustrious nobles accompanied his body to the tomb; "and when the customary rites had been performed," say the Persians, "the earth, opeu-

ing like a shell, received into its bosom this pearl of inestimable price." His funeral oration was composed by his friend Ali-Chyr, and delivered by a celebrated orator, twenty days after his interment, in the presence of the Sultan, the sheikhs, the doctors, and an immense concourse of people. Ali-Chyr laid the first stone of a monument which he caused to be raised to his memory, and his fame became immortal in the minds of his countrymen.

His writings are very voluminous; at Oxford twenty-two volumes are preserved of his works, of which he composed nearly forty, all of great length: the greater part treat of the theology of the Mussulmans, or are written in the mystic style. He collected the most interesting under the name of *Haft-Aurenk*, or "the Seven Stars of the Bear, or the Seven Brothers;" and amongst these is the famous poem of Yussuf and Zuleika.

The tale extends in the original to four thousand couplets. Sir William Jones pronounces it to be "the *finest* poem he ever read;" and nothing can exceed the admiration which it inspires in the East. The abridged version which is here offered may, perhaps, convey some notion of its style, though I offer rather an adaptation than a translation.

The name of the wife of Potiphar is not mentioned in the Koran, but the poets have given her the appellation of Zuleika, though she is by some Arabian commentators called Rahil. Her history, as given by her poetical biographers, presents a very different picture from that which we have been accustomed to look on. Her love, disappointment, weakness, despair, and final happiness, form the features of a most exciting drama, and one the most remarkable in Oriental literature.

Zuleika, the daughter of Taimus, king of Mauritania, beheld in a dream a figure of such extraordinary beauty that she became immediately enamoured of the glorious vision, and sunk into a deep melancholy, fruitlessly longing for the unknown object. This dream was three times repeated, and the last time the beautiful apparition named Egypt as the land of his abode. The state of Zuleika's mind is thus described:—

The ravens of the night were hush'd,
  The bird of dawn began his lay,
The rose-bud, newly-awakened, blush'd
  To feel the touch of springing day;
And bade the roses round unveil,
Roused by the warbling nightingale.

The jasmine stood all bathed in dew;
Wet were the violet's lids of blue.

Zuleika, fairer than the flowers,
Lay tranced—for 'twas not sleep that stole
Her senses, through the night's still hours,
And raised new visions to her soul.
The heart unfettered, free to rove,
Turned towards the idol of her love.(56)
No:—'twas not sleep, 't was motionless,
Unbroken thought, repressed in vain;
The shadow of the day's distress,
A frenzy of remembered pain.

But, midst those pangs, what rapture still;
The same dear form is ever there;
Those eyes the rays of Eden fill,
And odours of the blest distil
From every curl of that bright hair!

His smiles!—such smiles as Houris wear,
When from their caves of pearl they come,
And bid the true believer share
The pleasures of their sacred home.

See, on his shoulder shines a star
That glows and dazzles as he moves;[57]
She feels its influence afar,
She gazes, worships, hopes—and loves!

At this period, while her mind is absorbed by the one engrossing idea, an embassy arrives in Mauritania from that very country; Egypt, the land of all her hopes, soliciting the hand of the princess for the Asis, or grand vizir of Pharaoh: an offer which she unhesitatingly accepts, being secretly convinced that her visionary lover and her proposed future husband are the same. She accordingly departs for Egypt, with a splendid and numerous retinue, and makes a magnificent entry into Memphis, under the escort of the Asis Potiphar, or Kitfîr, himself, who comes to meet his bride. Curious to discover his identity, she anxiously seizes an opportunity of peeping through the curtains of her litter, but is filled with grief and dismay on finding a totally different person from the lovely image of her dreams.

She thus exclaims, on hearing the acclamations which announce the arrival of the Asis, when he first comes to meet her, before she has yet made the discovery fatal to her peace:—

Oh! joy too great—oh! hour too blest!
He comes—they hail him—now, more near,
His eager courser's feet I hear.
Oh! heart, be hushed within my breast,
Burst not with rapture! Can it be?
The idol of my life—divine,
All radiant, clothed in mystery,
And loving me as I adore,
As none dared ever love before,
Shall be—nay, *is*—even now, is mine!

I will be patient: but his breath
Seems stealing o'er my senses—death
Were better than suspense like this—
One draught—though 'twere the last—of bliss!
One glance, though in that glance I die,
To prove the glorious certainty!

Her horror and despair on finding how much her fancy had deluded her, knew no bounds:—

Not he! not he! on whom for years
My soul has dwelt with sacred truth;
For whom my life has passed in tears,
And wasted was my bloom of youth:

For whom I breathed, and thought,
and moved,
My own, my worshipped, my beloved!

I hailed the night, that I might gaze
Upon his star's unconquered blaze:
The morn but rose that I might pray,
Hope, wish, expect from day to day,
My sole existence was that thought,
And do I wake to know 'tis nought?
Vain tears, vain madness, vain en-
deavour,
Another blasts my sight for ever!

In the meantime the unconscious bridegroom, exulting in his happiness, conducts the gorgeous train of attendants, with a great display of pomp and riches, to usher his bride of far-famed beauty into the city of Memphis.

ZULEIKA'S ENTRANCE INTO MEMPHIS.

Dawn upon the wide world broke,
And the sun's warm rays awoke;
Scattering o'er the cloudy sky
Hues of rich variety:
Such bright tinting as illumes
With its rays the peacock's plumes,
And the parrot's feathers bright,
Touches with a starry light.

The Asis rides in kingly guise;
Yon curtained litter holds the prize
More precious than all wealth beside—
His own, his young, his peerless bride.

Around, afar, of homage proud,
In countless ranks his warriors crowd,
Well may the lordly Asis boast
The glories of his gorgeous host.

Rich are the veils, profusely spread,
That canopy the "fair one's" head;
Like some delicious tree that throws
Its shade, inviting to repose:
And, like soft turf, the carpets lie,
Bedecked with gay embroidery.

The temple moves, all glorious, on—
Throned in the midst the "happy one."
All heaven resounds with shout and
song,
As the bright pageant sweeps along.
The camel-drivers' cries succeed,
Urging their stately beasts to speed.
Whose hoofs, with swift and frequent
tread,
The sands with moon-like forms(58)
have spread:
The earth is ploughed by coursers' feet,
And still fresh hosts the wounds repeat.

Many a fair and blushing maid
Exulted in the gay parade:
And all, who called the Asis lord,
Hailed the fair idol he adored.

But she—"the beautiful," "the blest"—
What pangs, what tumults shook her
breast!
She sat, concealed from every eye,
Alone—in hopeless misery.
"Oh, Fate!" she cried; "Oh, ruthless
Fate!"
Why am I made thy mark of hate;
Why must my heart thy victim be?
Thus lost, abandoned—crushed by thee!
Thou camest, in troubled dreams, and
stole
The peace, the pleasure of my soul,
In visions that the blest might share,
Whose only fruit has been despair.
I see each glittering fabric fall;
But vain reproach, vain trust, vain all!
For help, for rest, where can I fly,
My heart is riven—let me die.

Have I then lingered long in pain,
In sad suspense, in musings vain,
To be—oh, crowning grief!—betrayed,
In foreign lands a victim made.

Relentless destiny! accurst
Were all the joys thy visions nurst.
Is there no drop of hope left yet?
Must I *all* promises forget?
Dash not my cup to earth: say, Power benign,
I may be blest—even yet he may be mine!

In a similar strain to these upbraidings of "the fair one" is Timon's indignant address to the Deity who persecutes him, as Lucian records it.(59)

"He besieges Jupiter with a storm of epithets, and railing at the dotage into which the god has fallen, and his imbecility in permitting so much evil in the world. He reminds him of the former times, in which his lightning and thunders were in constant occupation, &c. &c. He then comes to his own particular case, and upbraids the god for allowing him to be treated with so much ingratitude."

"Why" continues Zuleika distractedly, "hast thou thus cruelly robbed me of my peace? What have I done to thee to be thus treated; it is folly indeed that I seek help from thee. When souls melt, thou art called upon for aid; what is the melting of *thy* soul?"

Thus raved Zuleika, when without
Arose the sudden deafening shout,
That hailed the close of all their toil—
"Lo!—Memphis! and the banks of
Nile!"

Then, far and wide, the glittering ranks
Rush to the flowery river's banks.
The Asis' sign his slaves obey,
Gold, silver, flowers, bestrew the way:
And o'er the litter gems are thrown,
Whose countless rays like meteors
shone;
As thick they fall as on the rose
Hang the rich dews at evening's close;
The courser's feet on rubies trod,
O'er mounds of gold the camel strode.

On swept the train—one gorgeous mile,
Planting with gems the banks of Nile;
The proud stream rolled its waters deep
O'er pearls in many a shining heap:

Each shell was filled with pearls; each
 scale
That clothed the crocodile in mail,
Was changed to silver, as he lay
And basked amidst the fervid ray.

The original is slightly altered in the above, it runs in this curious strain:—

"Thus, *for a whole mile*, the procession moved on, scattering jewels on the banks of the Nile; the proud stream was filled with imperial pearls; *every fish's ear was a pearl shell*, and so much silver was thrown in that the crocodile became a *silver-scaled fish*."

And onward to the palace gate
The train pour'd on, in sumptuous
 state,
The glowing portals opened wide,—
In flow'd the overwhelming tide,
Ushering the Asis and his bride.

A throne the Peris might have framed,
The sun and moon's pale lustre
 shamed:
And she, whose radiance all effaced—
Zuleika—on the throne was placed.
Sparkling with jewels, red with gold,
Her heart shrunk, withered, crushed,
 and cold;

Altho' a feverish sense of pain
Frenzied her mind and seared her brain:
As on a flaming hearth she sat—
Amidst rejoicing—desolate!
Laden with many a priceless gem,
Crown'd with a gorgeous diadem,
Each pearl a poisonous drop appears:
And from her eyes fall scalding tears.

And thus a crown is gained—for this,
We leave all thoughts of present bliss!
We toil, we strive, we live in care,
And in the end possess—despair!
Our sun of youth, of hope, is set,
And all our guerdon is—regret!

This profusion at the marriage of persons of consequence is by no means unusual in the East. It is related that Mahadie, the son of El Mansor, the founder of Bagdad, in his pilgrimages, expended enormous sums; in one alone he is said to have disbursed six million dinars of gold. He founded cisterns and caravanseras, and distributed them along a measured road of seven hundred miles. His train of camels, *laden with snow*, was prodigious; this was a luxury intended to refresh the fruits and liquors of the royal

banquet. He gave away four-fifths of the income of a province, before he drew his foot from the stirrup. At his nuptials, a thousand pearls of the largest size were showered on the head of the bride, and a lottery was made of lands and houses.

The poem now pursues the scriptural account of the life of Yussuf, whose supernatural beauty is, however, described as being the especial gift of God, and recorded to have been so great, that no woman could look on him without love. Zuleika, therefore, only shared the fate of all her sex. Some writers say the ladies who clamoured so much against her for her passion, were, when he first entered the chamber where they were all assembled, in the act of cutting pomegranates, some say oranges, and in their admiration and amazement, cut their fingers instead of the fruit. This adventure is frequently represented in Persian MSS.:—see several in the British Museum, and Bib. du Roi, Paris. Joseph is considered the emblem of divine perfection, and Zuleika's love is the image of the love of the creature towards the Creator: some go so far as to say that we ought to follow her example, and should permit the beauty of God to transport us out of ourselves. The

rapid change from prison to high estate of Yussuf (or Joseph), they consider a type of the impatience of the soul to burst its fetters and join its Creator. His great charity is constantly spoken of. Sâdi praises him for this in his Gulistân, and relates that during the seven years' famine in Egypt, Yussuf deprived himself, every day, of a portion of his food, to give to the sufferers: this trait is often mentioned by Eastern writers.

Yussuf was always surrounded with a celestial light, typical as well of the moral beauty and wisdom which adorned his mind.

He is sold as a slave, and Zuleika becomes his purchaser, to the great rage and envy of all her rivals, amongst whom was included the Princess Nasigha, of the race of Aad. The beautiful Yussuf now enters her service, and, at his own desire, a flock of sheep are given to his special keeping, his admiring mistress wishing, by every indulgence, to attach him to her.

The nurse of Zuleika is the confidante of the passion which she cannot control, and which, at length, in an imprudent moment, she discloses to its object himself.

The poet represents Yussuf as less insensible to her regard than we are informed, by Scripture, that he really was: and it became necessary that a miracle should be performed, in order to deliver him from the

temptations with which he is surrounded, and which are nearly overcoming his resolution. His father, Jacob, or the angel Gabriel in his likeness, appears, to warn him of his danger, and he flies, leaving his mistress in an agony of despair, rage, and grief. She thus exclaims:—

Is this a dream!—another dream,
Like that which stole my senses first,
Which sparkled o'er my life's dull stream,
By idle, erring fancy nursed?
Was it for this my life I spent
In murmurs deep, and discontent—
Slighted, for this, all homage due,
From gen'rous, faithful love withdrew?
For this, no joy, no pomp have prized;
For this, all honours have despised—
Left all my soul to passion free
To be thus hated—spurn'd—by thee!
Oh, God! to see thee loathing turn,
While on my cheek swift blushes burn;
Contempt, abhorrence on thy brow,
Where radiant sweetness dwelt—till now!
Thy bitter accents, fierce, severe,
In harsh, unwonted tones to hear:
Thy horror, thy disgust to view,
And know thy accusations true!

All, all but this I could have borne,—
A husband's vengeance and his scorn;
To be reproached, disgraced, reviled,
So Yussuf on his victim smiled.
I would, amidst the desert's gloom,
Have hailed, with thee, a living tomb;
My home, my state, my birth forgot,
And, with thy love, embraced thy lot;
Had taught my heart all pangs to share,
And prove what perfect love can dare.

Let me look back to that dark hour
That bound my spirit to thy power—
Thy grateful words, thy glance recall,
My hopes, my love—and curse them all;
Let me thy tender looks retrace,
The glories of thy heavenly face;
Thy brow where Aden's splendour lies,
And the mild lustre of thine eyes:
Yet, let my heart no weakness prove,
But hate thee as I once could love.

What fearful eloquence was thine,
What awful anger—just—divine!
Shuddering, I saw my heart display'd,
And knew all this *I* should have said!

'Twas mine to shrink, withstand, in
time,
For, while I sinned, I knew my crime.

Oh! wretched, wavering heart!—as vain
Thy wild resentment as thy pain:
One thought alone expels the rest,
One sole regret distracts my breast,
O'ermastering and subduing all—
More than my crime, more than my fall:
Are not shame, fear, remorse, forgot,
In that one thought—he loves me not!

The regrets of his unfortunate mistress follow the pure-minded Yussuf to his gloomy prison, where she pictures his sufferings incurred for her crime, and thus laments, and strives to derive comfort from reflection:

Though in a dark and narrow cell
The "fair beloved" confined may dwell,
No prison is that dismal place,
'Tis filled with dignity and grace:
And the damp vaults and gloom around
Are joyous Spring, with roses crown'd.

Not Paradise to me were fair
If he were not a dweller there;
Without his presence all is night,
My soul awakes but in his sight:

Though this frail tenement of clay
  May here amidst its pomp remain,
My spirit wanders far away,
  And dwells with his in prisoned pain.

There is now but little variation from the scriptural relations, and Yussuf becomes grand vizir of Egypt, governing with wisdom and skill. Zuleika finds herself a widow: her hopes are renewed, and she is no longer under the necessity of suppressing her affection. She causes a house to be built opposite the residence of the object of her devotion, in order that she may behold him day by day, and hear the sound of his horse's feet as he passes.

Inspired by love, Zuleika at length renounces idolatry, and her lover hails her as a convert to the religion of the only true God. She presents herself as a believer before Yussuf, and is rewarded by the return of her early youth and beauty, at his prayer: for he now sees no obstacle to his love, and at once acknowledges it, and returns the passion which had been before so fatal to them both.

YUSSUF'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

Not love thee!—ah! how much I loved
Long absent years of grief have proved.
Severe rebuke, assumed disdain,
Dwelt in my words, and looks in vain:
I would not passion's victim be,
And turned from sin—but not from
thee.
My love was pure, no plant of earth
From my rapt being sprung to birth:
I loved as angels might adore,
And sought, and wish'd, and hop'd no
more.
Virtue was my belov'd: and thou
Hadst virtue's impress on thy brow.
Thy weakness showed how frail is all
That erring mortals goodness call.

I thank'd thee, and reproached thee not
For all the sufferings of my lot.
The God we worship was my friend,
And led me to my destined end,
Taught the great lesson to thy heart
That vice and bliss are wide apart:
And join'd us now, that we may prove
With perfect virtue, perfect love.

Nothing now disturbs the tranquillity of their loves, and they live for many years united, until at length Yussuf dies, and his faithful and tender Zuleika, unable to survive his loss, follows him to the tomb. The poem concludes with moral reflections, and an address from the poet to his son.

HATIFI.

Abd'allah, surnamed Hatifi, was born at Jâm, in Khorassan. He was nephew to the great poet Jâmi, with whom he lived on more amicable terms than could naturally be expected between rival poets, both so

highly distinguished. The ambition of Hatifi was to enter the lists with his uncle, by composing five poems, on the same or similar subjects, with the Khamsah, of that illustrious son of song. Opinions are divided as to whether he succeeded as well as his master, but his sweetness and pathos are unequalled.

However beautiful may be Nizami's exquisite version of the favourite story of Mejnoun and Leila, that of Hatifi is confessedly superior. Hatifi died in A.D. 1520, and was buried in the village of Gardschard.

When he was beginning his great poem, he begged his uncle to write the first line for him; which he did, and it contained a prophecy of his nephew's future fame. Hatifi's works are "Khosrû and Shireen;" "Heft Manseer;" "Mejnoun and Leila;" and the "Timûr Namah, or Victories of Timûr."

The subject of the tale of Mejnoun and Leila is extremely simple, and it is said to be founded on fact; it is, in fact, but a repetition of the oft-repeated truth that—

"The course of true love never did run smooth."

Kaïs was the son of an Arabian chief, handsome, amiable, and accomplished beyond all his contemporaries. A fine poet, as the fragments of his verse still repeated

with enthusiasm by the Arabs of Hejas prove.

Leila was the daughter of a neighbouring chief. She was equally accomplished with her lover: and nothing seemed likely to disturb the happiness which their permitted attachment promised, till the avarice of her father destroyed at once all their hopes. Leila was commanded to think of Kaïs no more, as she was destined to be the bride of one more rich and powerful; and, in spite of the grief and remonstrances of the unfortunate pair, they were separated. Kaïs became insane from disappointment, and his name was, therefore, changed to Mejnûn (the distracted). Death at length put a period to his miseries, and his faithful mistress soon followed him, leaving her cruel parent to his late and vain remorse, and the memory of these victims of avarice to eternal honour and regret.

There are two beautiful expressive couplets by the Moollâh of Rûm, characteristic of Eastern brevity and simplicity.

The Khalifah said to Leila, "Art thou the damsel for whom the lost Mejnûn is become a wanderer in the desert? Thou surpassest not other girls in beauty." Leila answered—"Be silent: for thou art not Mejnûn!"

THE MEETING IN THE DESERT.

FROM THE POEM OF "MEJNUN AND LEILA."

Even like the roaming moon, along
The dreary path fair Leila strayed,
Till, worn and spent the wilds among,
Deep sleep o'erpowered the lovely maid:
And from her hand the bridle's check
Fell on the patient camel's neck.

The guides were far, and dark the night,
The weary camel stopped to graze,
The caravan was hid from sight—
Then lost amidst the desert's maze.
Unconscious still, she wandered on,
And woke—untended and alone!

The Rose[60] was severed from the plain,
Nor friends nor strangers now intrude:
On through the waste she speeds amain,
But all is trackless solitude.
From spot to spot with anxious fear,
She hastes, she calls, but none can hear!
When, from a wild and gloomy height,
A dusky form rush'd forth to sight.

No terror seized the maiden's heart—
A thought sprung there which chilled
her dread,
For in that waste, from man apart,
A life of pain her Kaïs(61) led.
Might not this stranger know his state,
And give her tidings of his fate?

So wasted, worn, and changed with care,
His mind a void, himself forgot,
The hapless victim of despair—
Even she, the True One, knew him not!

"Whence com'st thou?" Leila said;
"and why
Amidst these deserts dost thou roam?
Tell me thy name—what destiny
Has lured thee from thy friends and
home?"

The grief-struck youth, unconscious
grown,
Knew not his Leila's gentle tone:
"Seek'st thou to know what slave am I,
For ever doomed a wretch to rove?
'Tis Kaïs, spent with misery—
'Tis hapless Mejnoon,(62) mad for love!"

The maiden with a sudden bound,
Sprang from her camel to the ground:

"Ah! wretched one!—too fondly dear,
A voice, long mute, let Kaïs hear;
Thy saviour let thy Leila be—
Look up—'tis Leila—I am she!"

His mind awoke. One moment's gaze,
One cry of startled, wild amaze!
Though years of madness, grief, and
pain,
Had held him in their galling chain;
That magic name has broke the spell,
And prone to earth lost Mejnoon fell.

Scarce less with woe distraught, the
maid
Sat on the ground, his form beside:
His head, which in the dust was laid,
Upon her knees she drew, and dried
His tears with tender hand, and prest
Him close and closer to her breast:
"Be here thy home, beloved, adored,
Revive, be blest—oh, Leila's lord!"

At length he breathed—around he gazed
As from her arms his head he raised:
"Art thou," he faintly said, "a friend
Who takes me to her gentle breast?
Dost thou, in truth, so fondly bend
Thine eyes upon a wretch distrest?

Are these thy unveiled cheeks I see—
Can bliss be yet in store for me?

"I thought it all a dream, so oft
Such dreams come in my madness now.
Is this thy hand, so fair and soft?
Is this, in sooth, my Leila's brow?
In sleep these transports I may share,
But when I wake 'tis all despair!

"Let me gaze on thee—if it be
An empty shade alone I see;
How shall I bear what once I bore
When thou shalt vanish—as before!"

Then Leila spoke, with smiles all light:
"To hope, dear wanderer, revive;
Lo! Zemzem's waters cool and bright
Flow at thy feet—then drink and live.
Seared heart! be glad, for bounteous
Heaven
At length our recompense hath given.
Belov'd one! tell me all thy will,
And know thy Leila faithful still.

Here in this desert join our hands,
Our souls were join'd long, long before;
And, if our fate such doom demands,
Together wander evermore.
Oh Kaïs! never let us part;
What is the world to thee and me?
My universe is where thou art,
And is not Leila—all—to thee?"

He clasped her to his aching breast,
One long, sad, tender look he cast;
Then with deep woe, in vain represt,
Kissed her fair brow, and spoke at last:

"How well, how fatally I love,
My madness and my misery prove.
All earthly hopes I could resign—
Nay, life itself, to call thee mine.
But shall I make thy spotless name,
That sacred spell, a word of shame?
Shall selfish Mejnoon's heart be blest,
And Leila prove the Arab's jest!
The city's gates though we may close,
We cannot still the tongues of foes.
No: we have met—a moment's bliss
Has dawned upon my gloom—in vain!
Life yields no more a joy like this,
And all to come can be but pain.

Thou, thou—adored!—might be my
own,
A thousand deaths let Mejnoon die,
Ere but a breath by slander blown
Should sully Leila's purity!
Go, then—see where thy tribe return,
Fly from my arms that clasp thee yet:
I feel my brain with frenzy burn—
Oh, transport! could I thus forget!"

The frantic lover fled—while near
The tramp of steeds can Leila hear:
Senseless, her mind with anguish torn,
Fair Leila to her tents is borne.

For many a night and many a day
The dark waste saw lost Mejnoon stray:
Bleeding and faint, 'twixt death and
life,
Waging with fate unequal strife.
Wild on the blast his words were flung,
Wild to the winds his songs were sung.
The shudd'ring pilgrim, passing by,
Paused as he heard the maniac's cry,
Nor dared upon his lair intrude,
As thus he raved in solitude:

"How can I live where thou art not?
In dreams I trace thy image still!
I see thee, and I curse my lot;
I wake—and all is chill.
The desert's faithless waters spread
A snare to lure me on:
My thirsty soul is vainly led,
I stoop—the wave is gone!

"The fevered thoughts that on me prey,
Death's sea alone can sweep away.
I found the bird of Paradise,
That long I sought with care;
Fate snatched it from my longing eyes,
I held—despair!

"Though Khizzer,[68] girt with mystic spell,
Had seemed to be my guide,
Scarce had I reached the blessed well,
Its source was dried!

Wail, Leila, wail, our fortunes crost;
Weep, Mejnoon, weep—for ever lost!"

SCHEIK FEIZI.

It was said of the great historian Abûl Fazil, that the monarchs of Asia stood more in awe of his pen, than of the sword of Akbar. His brother, Feizi, possessed the gift of poesy in a high degree, and his compositions are highly valued. His Divan consists, like all the greater Divans, or collections of lyric poetry, of two principal divisions, namely, of Kassideh, or the longer elegiac poems, and of Gazelles, sometimes on love, and sometimes on mystic subjects. He mentions himself one which consists of eighteen thousand lines.

The praise of the Shah, Akbar, or *Great*, chiefly engaged his muse: and the monarch certainly merited the name more than any other Indian emperor whose history is recorded. His lighter pieces were such as are called Musk-gazelles, breathing sweetness, and filled with pleasurable ideas, presenting life as a scene of sunshine and summer, where storm and winter are unknown.

In the mystic poems, however, of this

author, he approaches nearer to the sublimity of Attar and the great Moollah than any other of their followers; his ideas are tinged with the colour of the Indian belief in which he was brought up. The most remarkable of this collection is called *Serre*, or "Atoms in the Sun," written in a thousand and one verses (the favourite number in the East): it is partly mystical, and partly philosophical. The title he has chosen is a portion of the mystery which envelopes the meaning, and which a Mussulman conceives it proper should always surround divine things. In the part devoted to philosophy, the work treats of the course of the sun through the Zodiac: Brahminical theology is mixed together with the ancient Persian and Indian fire-worship in this singular composition.

The story of Feizi's early life is romantic. He was introduced, when a boy, to the Brahmins, by Sultan Mohammed Akbar, as an orphan of their tribe, in order that he might learn their language, and obtain possession of their secrets. Feizi became attached to the daughter of the Brahmin who protected him, and she was offered to him in marriage by the unsuspecting father. After a struggle between honour and inclination, the former prevailed, and he confessed to the Brahmin the fraud that had

been practised, who, struck with horror, attempted to put an end to his own existence, fearing that he had betrayed his trust, and brought danger and disgrace on his sect.

Feizi, with tears and protestations, entreated him to forbear, promising to submit to any command he might impose on him. The Brahmin consented to live, on condition that Feizi took an oath never to translate the Vedas, nor repeat to any one the creed of the Hindoos.

Feizi, having entered into the desired obligations, parted with his adopted father, bade adieu to his love, and with a sinking heart returned to the sultan. Akbar was greatly mortified to find his scheme had so signally failed, but he was much touched with the story related to him by the young poet; and, respecting his oath, he forbore to insist on his translating the sacred books, though that was the great object to which he had devoted all his wishes.

The Sultan Akbar was a liberal thinker, and an enlightened searcher after truth, but he gave much offence to his Mohammedan subjects by the favour he showed to the Hindoos.(64)

Feizi composed a work called the Mahabarit, which contains the chronicles of the Hindoo princes: from this Ferishta drew largely, in his celebrated history, and

amongst the most romantic episodes which he relates, is the account of the family of Khaja Aiass. The events occurred about 1606.

Khaja Aiass was a native of Western Tartary, and left his country to try his fortune in Hindostan. He was young and full of hope, but the prospects he had before him were far from encouraging, for he was poor, and his friends were few; he was accompanied in his expedition by a young wife, who expected soon to become a mother, and was little able to bear the fatigues of their journey. In fact, as they were crossing the Desert, hunger, anxiety, and over exertion overcame her, and she sank exhausted by the way. In this lamentable condition Khaja Aiass found himself the father of a daughter, born under circumstances the most distressing. Their sufferings and adventures in the Desert were very great, but at length they reached Lahore, where the Sultan Akbar kept his court. Asiph Khan, one of his principal ministers, was a relation of Aiass, and received him with great kindness: and, from one situation of trust to another, he, who had begun his career in so untoward a manner, became, in the space of a few years, high-treasurer of the empire.

His daughter, born in the Desert, was called Mehr-el-Nissar, or the "Sun of

Women." As she grew up, she excelled all the ladies of the East in beauty, learning, and accomplishments. She was educated with the greatest care, and her genius and acquirements soon became the theme of general conversation. She was witty, satirical, ambitious, lofty, and her spirit beyond control. It happened, on one occasion, that Selim, the prince royal, came to visit her father. When the public entertainment was over, and all but the principal guests were withdrawn, and the wine brought, the ladies, according to custom, were introduced in their veils. Mehr-el-Nissar had resolved to make a conquest of the prince; she therefore exerted all her powers of pleasing, and entirely succeeded in her design: her dancing and singing enraptured him, and at length, when, as if by accident, she dropped her veil and disclosed her extraordinary beauty, his heart became completely her own. Selim, distracted with love, applied to his father, the sultan, to assist him; but Akbar, aware that the hand of the dangerous beauty was already disposed of, refused to commit an act of tyranny, and in despite of the entreaties and despair of the prince, Mehr-el-Nissar became the wife of her father's choice, Sheer Afkun, a Turcomanian nobleman of high lineage and great renown.

The bridegroom shortly after, disgusted with the insults and annoyances which he met with from Prince Selim, left the court of Agra, and retired with his wife to Bengal, where he became governor of the province of Burdwan.

When Selim succeeded his father, he recalled Sheer: but he dared not so far outrage public opinion, as to deprive the illustrious omrah of his wife. Sheer was a man of exalted feeling, and very popular: his strength and valour rendered him remarkable, and his good qualities endeared him to the people. He had spent his youth in Persia, and had served, with extraordinary renown, Shah Ismael, the chief of the Suvi line. His original name was Asta Fillō, but, having killed a lion, he was dignified with the title of Sheer Afkun, "Destroyer of the Lion;" and by that designation became celebrated throughout India. He served in the wars of Akbar with extraordinary reputation, and at the taking of Scinde displayed prodigies of valour.

Selim, now called Jehangire, kept his court at Delhi when Sheer returned. The husband vainly hoped that time had effaced the memory of Mehr-el-Nissa from the

monarch's mind; and, being of a noble and trusting disposition, he suspected no treachery. Jehangire had, however, resolved, if possible, to rid himself of his rival.

On one occasion, when they were hunting, he caused him to be exposed to a tiger. Sheer defended himself against the beast in a manner described as perfectly miraculous, without weapons, like a knight of romance, and killed his antagonist. The sultan, unmoved by his valour, next laid a plot to have him trodden to death by an elephant, but he again escaped, having attacked the raging animal and cut off its trunk.

His house was, after this, beset by assassins, and he was in great peril, but once more succeeded in foiling his assailants. His valour and resolution were no match for the treachery of his powerful foe, and, in the end, the heroic Sheer fell a victim to the persevering cruelty of his rival: he was drawn into an ambush, and fell, after a fearful struggle, pierced with six balls, having killed several of his murderers in the conflict.

Mehr-el-Nissar was now free, and her conduct gave cause of suspicion that her grief was not extreme. She gave out that her husband, being aware of the sultan's attachment to her, had commanded that, in

case of his death, she should not long resist his wishes, but surrender herself to him immediately. She was accordingly conveyed, with great care, from Burdwan, where the unfortunate Sheer had, not long before his death, retired, hoping to live with her in peace; and the fair cause of so much mischief was taken to Delhi, to the Sultana-Mother, who received her with every demonstration of respect and affection.

An unforeseen disappointment, however, awaited the beautiful Mehr-el-Nissar: whether actuated by remorse or caprice, Jehangire, now that no impediment was in the way of his happiness, refused to see her; and she was shut up in one of the worst apartments of his seraglio, where four years were passed by the neglected beauty in such poverty and necessity, that, in order to support herself, she was obliged to employ her talent in various works, which were so exquisite that she obtained a quick sale for them amongst the ladies of Delhi and Agra. By this means she was enabled to repair and beautify her apartments; and she then clothed her attendants in the richest manner, retaining, however, herself, the simplest dress she could devise.

Curiosity, at length, subdued the moody resolve of the Sultan; and he determined to

see the singular woman, who, under whatever circumstances she appeared, commanded attention. He visited her apartments, where all he saw delighted him; but Mehr-el-Nissar most. He inquired why she made so remarkable a difference between the dress of her slaves and her own: to which question she replied, "Those born to servitude must dress as it pleases those whom they serve: these are my servants. I alleviate their bondage by every means in my power; but I that am your slave, oh, Emperor of the Moghuls! must dress according to your pleasure, not my own."

Charmed with the spirit of this answer, Jehangire at once forgot all his coldness; his former tenderness returned in all its depth, and he resolved to compensate his indifference to the lovely widow by loading her with riches and pomp. The very next day after their tardy interview, a magnificent festival was prepared to celebrate their nuptials. Her name was changed by an edict into Nûr-mâ-hal, the "Light of the Harem."(65) All his former favourites vanished before her, and during the remainder of the reign of Jehanjire, she bore the chief sway in all the affairs of the empire. She advanced all her family to the highest posts; her numerous relatives poured in from Tartary on hearing

of the prosperity of the house of Aiass. Her father, worthy as he was great, sustained his rank with virtue and dignity; her brothers, also, acquitted themselves, in their several governments, much to the satisfaction of all parties, and no family ever rose so rapidly, or so deservedly, to honour, rank, and eminence, as that of Khaja Aiass and his "Desert Born."

THE DESERT BORN.

Day fades amidst the mighty solitude,
The sun goes down and leaves no hope
behind;
Afar is heard the ravening cry, for food,
Of savage monsters; and the sultry
wind
Sears with its furnace-breath, but freshens not
With one reviving sigh, the dismal spot
Where three devoted beings panting lie,
Prone on the scorching ground,—as if
to die
Were all of good could reach their
helpless state,
Abandoned, 'midst the trackless sands,
to Fate!

And does young Aiass yield to fortune's
frown?
Are all his high aspirings come to this?
His haughty bearing to the dust bowed
down,
His glorious visions of success and
bliss—
The dreams that led him from his
Tartar home,
To seek, in golden Hindostan, renown—
Is this the end of all;—Lost, overcome,
By famine and fatigue subdued, at
last—
Patience and firmness—hope and valour
—past!

He cried—"Oh, Allah! when the Patri-
arch's child
Forlorn beside his fainting mother lay,
Amidst the howling desert dark and
wild,
When not a star arose to cheer her way,
Heard she not Zemzem's murmuring
waters nigh,[66]
And the blest angel's voice that said
they should not die?

But I—look on my new-born child—
look there!
On my young wife—what can I but
despair!

She left her tents for me—abandoned
all
The wealth, the state her beauty well
might claim:
Alas! the guerdon of her truth, how
small—
Alas! what had I, but a soldier's name,
A sword—a steed, my faithful, fainting
one,
Whose course is, like his master's,
almost done.
I led her here to die—to die!—when
earth
Has lands so beautiful, and scenes so
fair,
Cities and realms, and mines of count-
less worth;
Monarchs—with proud sultanas all
their care,
And none with Zarah worthy to com-
pare!
Yet here she lies—a broken cloud!—
this gem,
Fit for the first in India's diadem!

Oh, she was like that tree,(67) all purity,
Which, ere the hand of man approach
the bough,

No bird or creeping insect suffers nigh,
Nor shelter to ought evil will allow;
But once the fruit is plucked, there ends
the charm—
Dark birds and baneful creatures round
it swarm.
Thou selfish Aiass, hast destroyed the
tree,
Behold its lovely blossoms scathed by
thee!

Is there no hope;—revive, my noble
steed,
Fail not thy master at his utmost need;
Thou canst, thou wilt support her gentle
weight?
Courage!—thou wert not wont to
deem it great.
A little further—yet one effort more—
And, if we perish then, our miseries
are o'er."

"But, oh!—my child!" the fainting
mother cried,
"My arms are feeble, and support her not.
And thou, lost Aiass, death is in thy face:
Why should we strive to quit this
hideous place?
My babe and I can perish by thy side—
Oh! let our graves be in this fatal spot."

She spoke, and prostrate fell. With
nerveless hands
Her form sad Aiass on his steed has
cast,
Which, trembling with that lifeless
being, stands—
His struggling breath comes heavily
and fast.

A task, a fearful task, must yet be
done,
Ere he the Desert's path shall dare
explore,
His babe must sleep beneath yon tree
—alone!
No parent's kiss shall ever wake her
more.
Some leaves he plucked, the only
leaves that grew
Upon that mound, so parched and
desolate,
These o'er the sleeping innocent he
threw—
Looked not—nor turned—and left
her to her fate.

"My babe! thou wert a pearl too bright
For pitiless earth's unfriendly slight.

He who first called thee forth again,
Shall place thee in thy parent shell:
There shalt thou slumber, free from
pain,
While guardian Peris watch thee well.
Within our hearts, two living urns,
Shall live thy memory—blessed one!
As the white water-lily turns
Her silver petals to the moon;
Though distance must their loves
divide,
And but his image gilds the tide."

THE MOTHER.

Oh, who shall tell what horror, what
dismay,
Flashed wildly from lost Zarah's
haggard eye,
When, toiling slowly on their devious
way,
Her sense returned, and lo!—her
arms no more
She found, with straining clasp, her
infant bore!—
She shrieked—Oh God! that cry
of agony

Will Aiass hear for ever. Hark! it
rings
Like the death trump, and by its fear-
ful spell
Back all his strength and wasted vigour
brings:
He feels unnatural force returning, swell
In all his veins—his blood is flame; that shriek
Resounds again, far through the Desert
borne.
What need of words the fatal truth to
speak?
What need of questions? is she not
forlorn—
Is not a branch torn from the tree away,
And will it not—even where it stands—
decay?

Oh! she had in those few brief hours
Her Desert-born had seen of light,
Gazed in its face, and thought the flowers
Of Eden clustered rich and bright
In glory, round its radiant brow!—
That all Al Jannat's gems were hid
Beneath that pure and snowy lid.
Where were those heavenly glances
now!

Oh! as she feebly knelt beside
Its rugged couch, her tears would start,
Lest aught of evil should betide
The cherished idol of her heart.
She traced the father's features there,
In that small tablet, pure and fair,
Exulting in a mother's name:
And, in her daughter, nurs'd the flame
That burn'd, divided, yet the same.

And has she lost that blessed one?
How lost?—starved—left to beasts a
prey!
Was deed so fell by Aiass done—
Her own beloved, her hope, her stay?
Has misery changed her heart to stone?
"My child! my child!" she shrieks:
the Desert wild
Return'd in hollow yells—"Give back
my child!"

THE BLACK SNAKE.

With flashing eye and rapid pace,
Of hope, of fear, alike bereft,
Flies Aiass, guided by the trace
His courser's tottering steps had left
Along the deep and sandy way,
Back where his poor deserted infant
lay.

Beneath a tree, the single one
That in the Desert sprang alone—
Like latent hope, that struggling, will
Live in the tortured bosom still—
Slumbering and peaceful lay the child;
A faint and tender roseate streak
Had dawned along its hollow cheek,
And in unconscious dreaming bliss—
it smiled.

But—coiled around it—peering in
To the closed eyes and tranquil face,
Winding its dark rings on the ivory
skin,
A black snake holds it in his fell em-
brace;
His forked tongue and fiery eyes
reveal,
The helpless infant's fate one moment
more shall seal!

With frantic shout the father onward
sprung,
While yet the serpent to his victim
clung;
The monster, startled from his prey,
Quelled by a human glance, relaxed
his hold,
With sudden bound unloose each
slimy fold,
And midst the rocky hollows slunk
away.
One phrenzied spring—and to his
panting breast,
Aiass, his wakened, rescued treasure
prest.

With step, than antelope's less fleet,
The happy father fled away,
And where his weeping Zarah lay,
Cast his loved burden at her feet.
His brain reels round, his short-lived
vigour flies;
Prostrate he falls, and darkness veils
his eyes.

THE CARAVAN.

Oh, wild is the waste where the caravan
roves,
And many the danger the traveller
proves;
But the star of the morning shall beckon
him on,
And blissful the guerdon his patience
has won;
Nor water, nor milk, nor fresh dates
shall he need,
No loss has he met of good camel or
steed,
He looks o'er the sands as a road to
renown,
For the hills in the distance his labours
shall crown:
He sings of Shiraz, and her generous
wine,
And pours to the prophet libations
divine;
The numbers of Hafiz awake in his song,
And who shall declare that the poet is
wrong?

GAZEL.

To-day is given to pleasure,
  It is the feast of spring;
And earth has not a treasure
  Our fortune shall not bring.

Fair moon! the bride of heaven confest,
  Whose light has dimmed each star,
Show not thy bright face in the East,
  My love's outshines it far.

Why sighs the lonely nightingale,
  Ere days first beams appear?
She murmurs forth her plaintive tale,
  For coming Spring to hear.

Oh, ye severely wise,
  To-day your counsels spare;
Your frown in vain denies
  The wine-cup and the fair.

Within our haunts of bliss
  The dervish may be seen,
Whose seat, till days like this,
  Within the mosque has been.

I care not—but the truth declare,
That Hafiz fills again:
His eyes are on his charming fair,
His lips the wine cup drain.

* * * * *

'Twas near a fountain's brink a group reclined,
Where waters sported with the morning wind,
Trees threw their shadows broad and deep around,
And grass, like emeralds, freshened all the ground.
All former care and future toil forgot,
They hailed the present in this happy spot:
Merchants they were, and great their treasured store,
Rich musk from Khoten, gems and stuffs they bore,
Bound o'er the desert sands to fair Lahore.
From climes remote, and different nations, some
Amidst these arid tracts were bent to roam
In search of pleasure, wandering from their home.

They sang their country's legends as they lay,
And soothe with melody the devious way:
One dark-eyed minstrel lured the curious throng,
To list the Brahmin's sad, mysterious song.

LAY OF BRIMHA'S SORROW.(68)

Minstrel, wake the Magic spell!
Sing of Love, its wonders tell;
Tell how it subdues the proud.
Shall we blame weak man that falls.
When thy glowing verse recalls,
How immortal nature's bowed:
How great Brimha's heart was tried,
How for woman's love he sighed.

Who shall say where love begins,
How its subtle way it wins?
Gods, who love the race they frame,
Cannot tell whence springs the flame.(69)
Man may reason long and well,
But can never break the spell.

Sing of Brimha, and the pain
Which disturbs his sacred reign;
Even on his heavenly throne
  Tears of sorrow cloud his eye,
Dreaming of that fatal one,
  Born in awful mystery:
Last created—prized the most,
Beauteous, loving, loved, and lost!

Sometimes when the stars look dim,
  And the moaning winds are high,
Brimha wakes his mournful hymn,
  Tuned to grief that cannot die.

THE GOD'S LAMENT.

Then farewell!—since 'tis a crime,
  Being, beautiful as day,
To adore thee through all time,
Since I may not call thee mine,
Nor before thy glance divine,
  Gaze my own rapt soul away.

Ill my anxious toil repaid me,
Fatal was the power that made thee!
Others may behold those eyes,
Others live for ages blest,
I must seek my native skies,
Robbed of hope, of peace, and rest.
Thou wilt make the world all light,
But my throne is endless night.

From my heart thy being came,
Springing from its purest flame.
Little deemed I that the last
Brightest of my works would be—
As my eager glances fast
On the perfect form I cast—
Fatal to my power and me!

Of the lotus flower I chose,
Leaves the freshest for thine eyes,
Flowers whose petals never close,
And whose colours are the sky's:
For thy hair, the clouds that fleet
O'er the radiant face of heaven;
And the waves thy dancing feet
All their rapid play had given

Every bud of purest race,
Was combined to form thy face;
All the powers my prescience knew,
In one mighty work I threw;
All its force my mind employed—
And the close its peace destroyed!

Fain would I the task forget,
Which has charmed each sense so long,
For its guerdon is regret,
And its memory breathes of wrong.
Not one hope can Fate allow,
'Tis a crime to love thee now!

Vainly is the world created,
Vainly may it rise or fall;
Dead to joy, with triumph sated,
'Tis to me a desert all.
All is nothing without thee,
Yet thy name is death to me!

Death?—ah, would that death could come,
And my long despair be o'er!
But in my eternal home,
I must mourn for evermore.

Weeping, even as Rudder wept,
Tears that in oblivion slept,
Till the din of mortal strife
Called his being into life.
Floods of tears he gave to me,
And the saddest flow for thee.
Farewell, child of beauty!—go
Bless and gladden all below;
Turn thine eyes to heaven in prayer,
And behold a lover there,
Who renounced, for thy dear sake,
All the bliss of earth combin'd:
Save the joys his power might take,
And to virtue all resign'd.(70)

* * * *

A shriek!—what sound is through the stillness sent?—
All pause, all listen, breathless and intent,
Even the sagacious camels cease to graze,
The coursers snuff the air with eager gaze:
And anxious voices soon their counsel lent—
"Some traveller, lost amidst the desert's maze,
Demands our care,—on—on ere yet too late,
Snatch we our brother from impending fate."

And thus was Aiass saved. And at
that hour
Arose the star that shed its guiding
power,
To lead him on to wealth, and pomp,
and state;
The noblest, highest midst the proud
and great.

And bards have told the fortunes of
that child,
Exposed to famine in the dreary wild,
Whose peerless beauty, and whose
mighty fame,
Have filled the world with Mehr-el-
Nissar's name!

NOTES.

(a) See "Specimens of the Early Poetry of France," Introduction to the Poema of Alain Chartier.

(b) Thus Catebi introduces the word *camel* into every hemistich of one of his poems!

(c) Sir William Jones says that this MS. is the most beautiful in the world: it is profusely adorned with gilding and wreaths of flowers, and written in a most exquisite hand.* There are at Oxford six copies of the same poem.

(1) This sect derive their name either from the Greek word, signifying *a sage*, or merely from the *woollen dress* in which they are clothed. They believe in predestination, and generally deny the existence of future rewards and punishments. Some of this sect affirm that the Christian doctrine is the same as their own.

(2) The modern Sufis, "a sect," says a writer in the Asiatic Journal, 1836, "not unknown in Europe, and which for a time reckoned a Fenelon amongst its numbers," possess a belief in the Koran, and suppose an *express contract on the day of eternity without beginning*, between the assembly of created beings and the supreme soul from which they were detached, when a celestial voice pronounced the words: "Art thou not with thy Lord"—or "bound to Him?" and all the spirits answered, "Yes." Hence it is that *Alist*, or "Art thou not?" and *Beli*, or "Yes," incessantly occur in the mystical verses of the Persians; and of the Turkish poets, who imitated them, as the Romans imitated the Greeks.

* Collection of Greaves, No. 1.

(3) The poet Spenser would seem, by the following lines, to have been a Sufi:—

"That wondrous pattern, whatsoe'er it be,
Whether in earth, laid up in secret store,
Or else in heaven, that no man may it see
With sinful eyes, for fear it to deflore,
Is *perfect beauty*, which all men adore.
Whose face and feature doth so much excel
All mortal sense, that none the same may tell."

(4) This is a very frequent metaphor used by the poets.

(5) See Note 2.

(6) The *material* and *intellectual* world are understood.

(7) Dryden's Life of Virgil, and Scott Waring's Tour.

(8) These gates are now familiar to the English; obtained by one of the most disastrous victories that ever followed a fearful massacre, they have been carried back in triumph to Somnât, after centuries of absence: and surely the great idol, which Mahmoud broke in pieces and strewed the fragments on the courts of the public mosque and his own palace, would be gratified, if stones had sense, as they were once thought to have, at the victims sacrificed to regain the gates of his temple; that temple visited, *in the time of the eclipses*, by more than three thousand pilgrims, when the hideous deity, who delighted in blood, was supplied twice daily with fresh water from the Ganges, a thousand miles distant!

(9) Dow's Hindostan.

(10) From the eighth chapter of this work, which is interspersed with curious historical anecdotes and fragments of beautiful poetry, the learned Ouseley quotes these lines:—"At the time when my coffin shall pass by, think not I am affected by any worldly cares. * * * When you gaze on my inanimate corse exclaim not 'alas! alas!' Should you fall into the snares of Satan, then, indeed, you may cry 'alas!' * * * Commit my body to the earth, and talk not of absence and separation; for the earth is only a veil which connects the secrets of lovers."

(11) Chap. vi., 1,—"On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king" * * * Chap. x., 2,—"And all the acts of his power and his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?"

(12) Son of Jamshid, another favourite Persian hero.

(13) Zittara signifies *a star*.

(14) In the East, the cypress is always a symbol of grace, beauty, and gladness, though with us it is an emblem of sadness and sorrow.

(15) See an excellent account of them by Mr. W. F. Ainsworth.

(16) It is to Jamshid Milton alludes in his "Il Penseroso,"

"Who owned the virtuous *ring* and *glass*."

(17) So in Sir William Jones.

(18) "The most famous talismans against the Dives were the seal of Soliman Jarad, fifth monarch of the world, which gave to the possessor command of the elements, demons, and all created things; the buckler of Jan Bin Jan, more famous in the East than the shield of Achilles amongst the Greeks; the impenetrable cuirass, and the flaming sword."—*Richardson's Dictionary.*

(19) *Mihman*, a stranger guest.

(20) His real name was Moudad-ed-din Abû Ismael Hossein.

(21) The Tegray ought to contain all the names of the Sovereign, interlaced in a peculiar manner.

(22) Moussûl was at that period a city of great renown.

(23) The letter Lam, in poetry, is the emblem of a ringlet of hair.

(24) Badakhshân is celebrated for its balass rubies. Badakhshi, the poet, so called from his birth-place, has the following couplet in one of his poems:—

"THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE.

"What is like the life of man,
Toiling thro' his little span!
Child of hope, and doubt and care,
Rocked by transport and despair.

"As the hour-glass is his state,
Such the emblem of his fate;
Like its sands which ever flow,
Alternating high and low."

(25) The similies in this poem are very strange: a very few specimens of this kind of composition will be sufficient for the English reader; to whom they will probably appear "high fantastical," and the sentiments singularly contradictory to those who are not Sufis!

(26) Tree of Paradise.

(27) Properly Efsal-ed-din Hakaiki; the name of Khakani being added by his master Aboul Ola, on account of his being a favourite with Khakani Manughir, Prince of Schirvan.

(28) The eastern poets are fond of comparing the eye of their

mistress to the nargus, or narcissus, as they imagine that flower to resemble an eye.

(29) In the original the line is—"He knows it,—he knows it,—he knows it!"

(30) The poet's real name is unknown; the one by which he is known comes from his having made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

(31) It is recorded that every time Ferhad struck the rock, he called out "Alas! Shireen!"

(32) See an account in the Oriental collections.

(33) A hundred men could not raise one of the pieces of stone which Ferhad had flung down.

(34) Al Cawthar, the river of Paradise.

(35) Hafiz says that the tulip first sprung from the blood of Shireen's unfortunate lover.

(36) See the lives of Hafiz, Hatifi, &c., on this curious subject.

(37) The bed of roses and rose-garden.—*Sir William Jones.*

(38) Feridoun (see the life of Firdousi) the son of Jamshid, passed all his youth in war with Zohac, the usurper of his kingdom, whom he at length overcame. He is looked upon as a model of every virtue but "the glorious fault of angels and of gods," ambition, clung to him in the midst of all.

(39) Travels of Hatim Tai.

(40) In Ross's Gulistan.

(41) Man was first formed of seven handfuls of different coloured clay,—whence the variety of complexion. The clay of which Adam was formed is said to have been *reddish.—Notes to Koran.*

(42) The tribe of Ad was destroyed by a powerful wind which blew for seven days and nights. From Wednesday to Wednesday.—*Ibid.*

(43) Abraham is emphatically called "the Friend of God;" having been thrown, by order of Nimrod, into an immense fire, the cords only were consumed with which he was bound, and the pile became a delightful garden.—*Ibid.*

(44) Nimrod, having attempted to ascend to heaven, to make war upon God, was punished by a swarm of gnats, which destroyed his impious subjects. One of the insects entered the ear or nostril of Nimrod, and penetrated his brain.—*Ibid.*

(45) By the power of the Prophet Saleh the rock opened, and a she-camel issued out, to the confusion of the Thammudites.—*Ibid.*

(46) The iron which David used in making coats of mail, became in his hands as soft as wax.—*Ibid.*

(47) All the dives and evil spirits were subject to Solomon.—*Ibid.*

(48) Jamshid is said, by some Persian writers, to have been cut in two by a saw applied to the crown of his head.—*Ibid.*

(49) The immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary is implicitly believed by the Mohammedans.—*Ibid.*

(50) An infant in the cradle is said to have borne witness to Potiphar of the innocence of Joseph.—*Ibid.*

(51) The devils who endeavour to climb up into the twelve signs of the zodiac are driven away by *stars* as with stones. The Mohammedans believe that those stars which sometimes appear falling, or shooting along the sky, are darted by angels at these inquisitive demons, who would pry into the secrets of the heavenly sphere.—*Ibid.*

(52) The Trappists seem to approach nearest to the sect of the Sufis.

(53) The Gazel (amatory poem) is properly restricted to thirteen couplets, in the original; the Kasidah are unlimited: in each couplet of the Gazel the sense must be complete, in the Kasidah it may run on. I could not flatter myself with the hope of succeeding in this peculiarity, and have not attempted it.

(54) Sir William Jones urged Reviczki to give a French version of Hafiz.

(55) The Saint of Malmesbury was in the habit of seating himself on the bridge, at the entrance of the town, and conversing and singing to the people, thus enticing them, by degrees, to listen to his serious exhortations.

(56) This metaphor is drawn from the custom of the Faithful turning their faces towards the Temple of Mecca.

(57) The sign of Yussuf's (Joseph's) holiness was indicated by a brilliant star, which shed its rays above his right shoulder; resembling the celestial light from the horns of Moses, and the nimbus which surrounds the heads of the saints of the New Testament.

(58) The original is very fanciful:—"The frequent tread of the horses and camels imprints moons, new moons, on the sand; soon a newer moon, formed by the hoofs, effaces, in quick succession, the cheeks of the full moon, and soon shines again, a charming full moon, and treads the new moon back again into nothing."

(59) See a series of papers, very curious and ingenious, entitled "Shakspere Papers," by the late Dr. Maginn, which appeared in "Bentley's Magazine," remarkable for their brilliancy and learning.

(60) Leila is called in the original "the Rose," "the Beloved One," "the True One," &c.

(61) *i. e.* Mejnoon.

(62) Kais was called Mejnoon, or "the Mad," after he became distracted.

(63) The Prophet of the Well of Life. M. Fabre d'Olivet, in his remarkable work, "De l'Etât Social de l'Homme," observes, when speaking of Ram, the divinity:—"There are few nations who do not boast of having possessed an Alexander. The earliest Ram was designated as Sicander of the two horns, on account of the *Ram* which he took as an emblem. These *two horns* have become singularly celebrated, they have given rise to the form of the *tiara* and the *mitre.*"

M. Fabre d'Olivet considers that Ram, Rama, and Jamshid, are but one and the same, the *spirit* of *life*, of *wine*, in fact, the *vivifire of the world*, Bacchus or Osiris. He thinks that the Celts of Europe, continuing their idolatry in spite of the manifestion of Ram, or the eternal being, paid, at first, little attention to the religion which he endeavoured to establish, and that they, rather in pity than in anger, designated his followers, Esk-*wander;* for from that name being given at first to the chief, it came to indicate the sect—a *wandering people*, which he thus accounts for:—

"*Ask*, *osk*, or *esk*, a multitude, or army; *wand*, a rushing wind, from whence the Saxon *wander*, whence *wind*, or *vent*."

This fanciful derivation may, perhaps, be equally conclusive with respect to that long disputed question of the meaning of the Basque designation of their country, *Esc*-uara?

It would almost seem that Alexander himself and Khizzer were identical, for the author of the "Monumens Mussulmanes" thus speaks of Khizzer, whose name he writes, in French, *Khédér:*—

Some think this personage the same as the prophet Elias, and indifferently employ one name for another: some think the soul of Enoch, transmigrated into the body of Phineas, the son of Aaron, after animating St. George, became fixed in Khizzer,* which name the Arabs derive from a word signifying *green*, *i.e.*, young.

Khizzer seems, sometimes, to answer to our wandering Jew; he is said to have drunk so deeply of a certain fountain as to have attained to immortality. This is the Fontaine de Jouvence, Fountain of Youth, of the old romances; the Arabs call it the Fountain of Life, and the Persians, Water of Life. It is situated in Les Pays Tenebreux, the Land of Darkness; and Khizzer is the only

* Hottinger, "Historiæ Orientalis."

person who is supposed to have quenched his thirst at the wondrous well.

Khizzer, *the Wanderer*, and Elias, one or both, are, at all events, believed to be always roaming about the world, assisting travellers by land and sea, especially such as are on sacred missions for the service of God. They are figured, by Mussulmen, as bald and aged men, with staves in their hands. Some Oriental writers record that these personages are peculiarly careful of the welfare of couriers who carry letters: dispatches are sometimes inscribed with their names, in order that they may the sooner arrive at their destination.*

It is further supposed that they remain, until the end of the world, in a beautiful garden, as their home, where all that they can desire is within their power to enjoy. A little before the end of all things, Elias is to appear, to prepare the way of the Messiah, and he has therefore been named "The Harbinger of Jesus."

As regards Alexander, called *by Mahommed*, in the Koran, the Two-horned Man, commentators have been at a loss to decide who is intended, but generally agree that he was a being favoured of, and who believed in the *true* God; that *guided by the Prophet* Khizzer, he reached the Land of Darkness, near the Fountain of Life, but he could not obtain permission to take a draught of the Eternal Spring, and died at the age of thirty-three years.

Of this same Alexander is told the anecdote, of his having, to console his mother for his short life, and to prove to her how little pleasure is to be found in existence, desired her to give an entertainment, and invite only those whose days had been happy. She did so, and no person arrived.†

(64) See Dow's Hindostan.

(65) Her name is sufficiently known throughout Europe by the poet Moore's exquisite verses, for she is the same as his heroine. She was called afterwards Nûr-jehan, "Light of the World;" for nothing appeared to her royal lover expressive enough to convey an idea of her perfections.

(66) The Well of Zemzem is held sacred by the faithful: at Mecca a temple encloses it, and any stone dipped in its waters is thought to possess singular virtue. I have seen a large pebble which has been thus made holy, and was presented, by a devout pilgrim, as

* See "Le Museum Pototianum," par M. Frœhn. See "Petit de la Croix, Mille et Un Jours," D'Herbelot, &c.

† See "Annales d'Eutychius," and "Aboulfarage Chronique Arabe."

the most valuable gift he could offer to a friend of mine in London, by whom it is kept in great honour.

(67) The Lit-chi, a tree of China, of which it is recorded that, before the hand of man has gathered the fruit, no bird or insect dares approach it; but has soon as any one has touched the branches, all sorts of voracious birds, large and small, come to prey upon it.

(68) Brimha, or Wisdom, say the sacred books of the Hindoos, weeping for the contempt shown of his orders by the men he had created, produced a *brown spirit,* called Rudder the Weeper, because he was created in tears. The brown spirit sat down before Brimha, and began to weep. Brimha afterwards created ten men, and one woman, named Kam (Love). She proceeded from his heart. With this beautiful being he fell in love, and, being reproached by the ten men, he conquered his passion, and changed her into ten bodies, one of which he gave to each of the *munies* (*i. e.* men).

(69) "God cannot account for the love he bears his creatures."—*Shaster*.

(70) Brimha is sometimes represented in the form of an infant, with his toe in his mouth, floating on a comala, or water flower, and sometimes on a leaf of that plant, upon the waters. The Brahmins mean by this allegory, that at the time of the renovation of the world, the wisdom and designs of God will appear as in their infancy. Brimha floating on a leaf shows the instability of things at that period; his toe, which he sucks, implies that Infinite Wisdom subsists of itself, and the position of Brimha's body is an emblem of the endless circle of eternity. We see him sometimes creeping forth from a winding shell, to typify the unsearchable ways in which Divine Wisdom issues forth. Brimh, or the Divinity, has a thousand names.—*See Dow's Hindostan.*



AUTHORITIES CONSULTED.

SIR WILLIAM JONES.
VON HAMMER.
GARCIN DE TASSY.
GLADWIN.
RICHARDSON.
WILKINS, HITAPODESA, &c.
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&c. &c.

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